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NARRATIVE

OF A

TWO YEARS' RESIDENCE

AT

NINEVEH,

AND TRAVELS IN

MESOPOTAMIA, ASSYRIA, AND SYRIA;

BY

THE REV. J. P. FLETCHER.

"Thy shepherds slumber, O King of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them." NAHUM iii. 18.

Second Edition.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

FROM the great interest excited respecting Nineveh, I have been induced to collect, and throw into a narrative, the notes of two years' residence on its mighty plains, with accounts of excursions into the remotest parts of Assyria. In order to complete the record of my travels, I have added some chapters descriptive of the countries on the route.

The hypothesis respecting the difference between the Babel mentioned in Genesis and that alluded to in the later inspired writers, is, I believe, entirely new; as are, also, most of the remarks on Assyrian history. Those which relate to the true position of the Ararat of Scripture I found, after my return, had suggested themselves to Bochart and others, but I am not aware that they have appeared before in an English dress.

The history of the Nestorians and Jacobites, as well as the account of the massacre of the former by the ferocious and savage Kurds, proceed from my desire to excite, on behalf of the Christians of the

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East, a spirit of kindly sympathy among their brethren in England.

The remarks on antiquities have been somewhat abridged, in consequenee of the ground being in great measure pre-occupied by Mr. Layard.

Before I conclude, I must acknowledge my grateful obligations to the living and the dead. Among the latter, I would particularize especially Herodotus and Joseph Simon Assemani. The former I have always found the most veracious, as well as the most simple and unaffected of writers; while the pages of the last-named contain an almost inexhaustible fund of information respecting the churches of the East, and other matters connected with Oriental history. Gibbon, who terms him "the learned and modest slave," might have added with truth the title of impartial, to his other epithets.

Among the living, I must number Samuel Birch, Esq., from whose valuable observations on the Karnak Tablet I have derived much useful information. I am also indebted to Mr. James Darling, of the Clerical Library, Lincoln's Inn Fields, for a copious supply of many rare and high-priced works of reference.

F.

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NOTES FROM NINEVEH,

&c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

Departure. Paris. French Oriental Works. Mediterranean Monks and Methodists. A Nondescript. Sicily. A Maltese Ecclesiastic. Malta. Nix Mangiare Stairs.

It was about the middle of February, 1842, when I first received the intimation that I had been appointed the lay associate of a clergyman, who was about to proceed on a mission of inquiry into the present state of religion and literature among the ancient Christian churches of the East. Soon after, my colleague proceeded to Malta, where he had spent the greater part of his early life, leaving me to follow him in the month of May.

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At that time I left England, and proceeded in the first place to Paris, where I hoped to have the opportunity of consulting two or three works on Oriental matters, which could not so readily be procured in London.

For some time France has taken a lively interest in the affairs of Turkey and of the East generally. Most of the Arabic and Turkish grammars and dictionaries are written in French, and we have in English scarcely any elementary work relating to either of those languages. It is true that we possess grammars of the written or classical Arabic, but they are of little use to one who wishes merely to acquire the vulgar dialects used in common conversation. Until very lately, too, no English steamer was to be found in the Mediterranean, while the innumerable French packets going hither and thither, seemed to assert the exclusive right of our Gallic neighbours to what they have been pleased to term a French lake. In Constantinople, and other parts of the Turkish empire, French is more frequently spoken than any other European language, with the exception, perhaps, of Italian, which, from its facility of acquirement, and its being the native tongue of the

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Roman Catholic missionaries, greatly predominates in Syria and Egypt. The French government, whether monarchical, imperial, or republican, has always fostered and promoted the labours of those men of letters, who devote their time to philological pursuits. In England, works of this kind are left, like all others, to the patronage of the public at large, and as the number of those interested in such pursuits will always be small, the linguist cares little to engage in labours which are attended with no profit, and even in many cases with certain loss. Men will always prefer amusement to instruction, or at least they will require that the two be blended together; and thus, the novelist, the historian, or even the writer of travels, may seek for his reward in the favour and the support of an amused and gratified public, while the scientific or philological writer will find that his researches must be, like virtue, their own reward.

After a very pleasant journey through the south of France, I arrived safely at Marseilles, and beheld with varied emotions the vast expanse of the blue Mediterranean extended before me. There, indeed, was that historical sea on whose waves Roman and Carthaginian had contended for the

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empire of the world. On its fertile shores had once existed the mighty empires of the past. Egypt, the foster-mother of arts and learning; Greece, the parent of poets, philosophers, and heroes; Rome, the impersonation of military power and dominion; Carthage, the busy trader of the old world; and last, though not least, the Holy Land of Palestine, rife with associations connected with the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and martyrs of our faith. But though ages of warfare and desolation have written on those once mighty shores, Ichabod, the glory has departed, yet the scenic beauty—a beauty rendered, perhaps, more touching from its contrast with decay—has not entirely abandoned them. The works of man's genius are ruined or gone, but the creations of Deity shine as fresh and as fair as when they first rose into existence at the fiat of the Omnipotent. No, the eye may mark with sorrow, the wrecks of man-created beauty which lie scattered around, but the dark blue sea has met with neither alteration nor change, and the bright sky of the south still retains its sunny smile.

And now from the deck of a French steamer I

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take my last adieu of Europe, and then turn to contemplate my fellow passengers. They are a motley group. Long-bearded Frenchmen and Italians contrast strangely with the smooth-faced, close-shaven Englishman, while here and there a red cap and blue tassel proclaims its wearer a son of the East. Figures, strange and novel to the eye of an untravelled Briton, present themselves, enveloped in long brown frocks, girt about the waist with the friar's cord. They seem beings of another age, relics of a system known only to us by the pages of history, and the life-like pictures of the middle ages, traced by the pencil of the great enchanter of the north. Yet whatever he might have been in times past, the monk of the nineteenth century has little of the poetic about him. Take the first methodist preacher you meet, invest him with a brown vest and a pair of sandals, and you have the fac-simile of a modern monk. Perhaps, too, the comparison may go deeper yet. The same religious enthusiasm, an enthusiasm which feels deeper longings and more intense disgust for the world than animates the ordinary class of religionists, has made alike the monk and the Methodist. But the Church of Rome has re-

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cognised and cherished the wild thoughts and irregular acts of enthusiasm, while the Church of England has repelled them from her with cold disdain; and the result has been, that the one possesses a well-organised body of supporters, who have, in return for the protection which they have received, consented to barter some of the independence of enthusiasm for the almost military regularity and obedience of a monastic rule, while the other has raised up enemies on every side of her, who conspire her destruction, and menace her stability continually. Whether the feeling that drove Wesley and Whitfield from the service of the church into the ranks of dissent, was a healthy and a proper one, I do not pause to enquire. The repentance of the present generation for the mistakes of the past, may be genuine and satisfactory, but it can scarcely retrieve the mischief. If it could, the numerous and zealous body of which Wesley was the founder might yet become the bulwark of the Church of England.

We had on board an individual who excited much curiosity, and greater disgust. He was a short olive-complexioned personage, with a pair of cunning and malicious eyes twinkling intensely

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with the love of mischief. No one could discover what part of the earth had the honor of giving him birth. The most searching inquiries failed of obtaining satisfaction, and even the curiosity of a guessing American, who set to the task with all the patient pertinacity of his countrymen, was doomed to rest unsatisfied. This mysterious individual had been, according to his own account, in every region of the habitable world. He spoke with equal volubility of the cities of Europe, and the wilds of Africa. He had been in London and at Pekin. He descanted on the mode of travelling in Turkey, and preferred it to the railroads of America. Tripoli and Timbuctoo seemed familiar words. Some doubts existed as to his religion; one or two judged him to be a Mahommedan, others said he was a Greek, an Armenian, or a Jew, while a few who had been occasionally wearied by his questions, or teased by his sarcasms, affirmed that such conduct could proceed from no one but a downright Pagan. However, the object of our enquiries deigned, in this latter particular, to satisfy in some measure our curiosity. He had annoyed a worthy Priest very much one day, at the dinner table, by some

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impertinence, and attempted to appease the Padre's displeasure, by professing his respect for the sarcerdotal order, adding, "for you must know, my Father, that I am a good Catholic." The Padre looked dubious, but said nothing, though I have no doubt that he thought such an unruly member better out of the Church than in it.

But we are passing along the Calabrian coast, having obtained a good external view of Naples and its celebrated volcano, while lying at anchor for a few hours in the bay. We sail by the Lipari, which resemble, somewhat, the tall chimnies of a manufacturing town, and like them smoke continually. Messina and Rhegium come on each side of us, and we move peacefully by the once terrible localities of Scylla and Charybdis. We did not fall upon or into either, notwithstanding the well known line, and indeed the rock and the whirlpool so dreaded of yore, seem to excite little terror in the breasts of modern sailors. Hardly, however, had we passed through the straits of Messina, when we were visited by a strong breeze, which set all around us in commotion. A veil of mist hid Sicily from our eyes, and the vessel

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began pitching and rolling to an extent which obliged nearly all the passengers to retire below. An unfortunate wight, who had succeeded with great difficulty in lighting his pipe, by the aid of a short rope, which was suspended from one of the masts, was seen staggering from one side to the other, the sparks flying about in all directions, much to the indignation of an Italian sailor, who imprecated on his unlucky head all the bad wishes with which the Ausonian vocabulary is so replete. I essayed to descend to the cabin, but the moans, and the odour which arose from thence were too strong for my sympathies, and olfactory nerves, so, wrapping my cloak around me, I passed the night on deck, and awoke the next morning from uneasy slumbers, just in time to see the first dim outline of Malta emerging from the horizon. Matters being upon the whole in a more placid state than on the preceding day, some of the sea-sick crept up the stairs, and were much comforted by the news that we were approaching land.

A Maltese Ecclesiastic, who had accompanied us from Naples, saluted me in Italian, but being ignorant of that language, I endeavoured to call up my school recollections of Cicero and Virgil,

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and addressed him in Latin. He answered me with great volubility, having been accustomed to speak it, in the college at Rome where he was educated. I felt disposed to envy his fluency, as I perceived myself getting confused with concords and cases, and had besides an awkward consciousness that my sentences were not very Ciceronian. My friend was completely *Laudator temporis acti*, and did not seem to relish the rule of England. He dwelt complacently on the virtues of the order of St. John, and hinted a wish to see their dynasty restored. He complained that the English had no religion, and in the same breath, lamented their proselyting propensities. I pointed out to the worthy Padre the slight inconsistency of these two statements, but he maintained his ground in more voluble Latin than I could command, and certainly he managed to have the last word. Like many of his countrymen, he could not admit that any one rejecting the authority of the Pope was a Christian; and he asked me triumphantly, whether a nation could have much sense of piety, that with such wealth and influence at its command, was content to provide only a miserable room, that had formerly been the kitchen or wine

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cellar of the Grand Master, for the service of the English Church.* Our discourse was drawn to a close by the entry of our vessel into the bay, and as all were eager to descend into the boats, it was impossible to debate the question any farther.

Landing on the quay, we found ourselves surrounded by a mob of dark-featured islanders, clamouring and shouting, and proclaiming each his own particular virtues in bad Italian, and worse English. After having been tossed and pulled for some moments hither and thither, I succeeded in securing the aid of a guide with whom I prepared to ascend the celebrated stairs known by the euphonious title of *nix mangiare*. Valetta is built on the top of a rocky promontory or headland, which, jutting out into the sea, divides the two principal harbours from each other. The ingenuity of some knightly engineer contrived to

* That reproach, I am happy to say, has since been rolled away from the English name by the munificence of the late lamented Dowager Queen Adelaide, who erected at her own cost, a spacious and magnificent church for the use of the English residents at Valetta. Yet about forty years had elapsed, since the period of the occupation of the island by the English, before this act of royal piety put to shame the tardiness and want of public spirit of the English residents at Valetta.

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form on each side of this promontory ascents of steps, so that all the lanes leading to the principal thoroughfare, are literally streets of stairs. On those which I was ascending, a troop of ragged urchins had taken up their post, and began to solicit my charity, with loud cries of *nix mangiare, nix mangiare*, which they presently translated for my benefit into "not got nothing to eat, not got nothing to eat." A small donation satisfied, or at least quieted, my youthful escort, and a few minutes afterwards, I found myself safely lodged in the temporary dwelling-place of my friend, who welcomed me to Malta with his usual kindness and hospitality.

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CHAPTER II.

Malta and the Maltese. Valetta. St. John's. Houses. Auberges. Capucin Convent. Carneria. Fatal accident. Fortifications. Calesh. Casal Mosta. Cività Vecchia. St. Paul's Bay. Casal Crendi. Macluba. Fungus rock.

EXPERIENCE confirms me more and more in the opinion that the English public commonly know far less of their colonies, than they do of other countries. China is distant enough, and yet we have had more written on the manners and customs of the people of Canton or Pekin, than we have on the character, language, and antiquities of the most interesting of our Mediterranean colonies.

Since the overland route to India has been established, numbers of travellers visit Malta

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every month, and the salubrity of its climate has led many medical men to recommend it as a sanatorium for a certain species of complaints. Yet, comparatively few that visit the island, feel sufficient interest in its people or its antiquities, to deem either worthy of much attention.

The Diary of the traveller generally presents a very imperfect view of the interiors of one or two churches, informs us that the Maltese are very brown, barbarous, and superstitious; and then proceeds to describe the festivities of some mess table, or exclusive English *soirée.*

A young Anglo-Maltese was astonished, during a short visit which he paid to England, to find his friends and relatives perfectly incredulous when he informed them that there were shops in Valetta, and that his coat and pantaloons were actually manufactured by a Maltese tailor. And yet Malta presents no inconsiderable claims to the notice of the studious traveller. It was for some time the residence of St. Paul, it received the last remnant of Christian chivalry, when, driven from Rhodes, they made this rocky isle "Europe's best bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite." It abounds with associations of a poetical and romantic nature.

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One at least of the islands, Gozo, is said to have been the enchanted home of Calypso; and Malta itself was colonized, and inhabited by the Phœnicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, and Saracens, previous to its occupation by the knights of St. John. Its language excited the interest, and occupied the attention of one of the first linguists in Europe, the late Cardinal Mezzofanti. Its antiquities, though not numerous, are by no means to be despised, and the habits, manners, and even superstitions of its semi-oriental population merit some attention, and more inquiry than the generality of travellers care to bestow. The absurd and silly prejudices of a few English merchants, and some self-satisfied military residents have indeed created a gulf between the two races, who, separated by mutual antipathies, care not to mix together in society, and perhaps the chilling repulsiveness of our northern manners, accords ill with the warm and excitable temperament of the south; yet, if the traveller can get beyond the exclusive circle which his English friends would fain draw around him, he will see and hear much to stir up his curiosity, and to repay with interest his inquiries. The Maltese are a

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lively, intelligent, quick-witted, and ingenious race, though, like their Italian neighbours, they are somewhat too fond of *dolce far niente*, and, like all southerns, prone to push religion to the extreme of superstition. Their ballads betray much genuine feeling, and abound in allusions which show clearly their Eastern origin, while the magnificent churches to be found even in the poorest villages reflect credit on their taste, and religious principle. After their knightly masters had deserted their post, the Maltese bravely defended their rights and liberties against the French invaders, and had nearly forced the garrison in Valetta to capitulate, when the English came to their assistance. Yet the Maltese have been reproached with moral degradation and cowardice, by men who never knew or cared to know a single native of the island.

The Strada Reale is the grand thoroughfare of Valetta, and towards it we direct our steps. Ascending a lane of stairs, we come to a more natural ascent leading into the square which fronts the old palace of the Grand Master, now occupied by the English governor. This edifice is built in the Italian style, and contains the armoury of the

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knights. You enter this apartment, and behold two lines of figures in armour, bearing the red-cross of Malta on their shields. Devices composed of warlike implements decorate the walls. Here is the suit of De Wignacourt, inlaid with gold, the word of the famous Corsair, Dragut; and a curious cannon, composed of a thin tube of iron, bound round with ropes, and covered with a coat of plaster painted black. Everything looks warlike and ferocious, and you may almost fancy yourself transported to the age of the Crusades. Descending from the armoury we pursue our way to the Collegiate Church of St. John, where the knights were wont to assemble on Sundays, and high festivals. It contains the chapels of the different nations, or languages as they were called, and the tombs of several of the grand masters. The rich variegated pavement of Mosaic marble is formed of tomb-stones, on each of which the armorial bearings of the deceased are emblazoned. The painted roof is divided into compartments, in which are represented scenes from the history of the order. Behind the high altar is a well-executed group in white marble, representing the baptism of our Saviour. To the right is the

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chapel of the Holy Sacrament, at the entrance of which are suspended the keys of Acre, Jerusalem, and Rhodes. A superb railing of silver excites your attention, and you are told how it was saved from French rapacity, by the ready wit of one of the canons, who covered the precious metal with a thick coat of green paint. You descend to the crypt, and muse over the monuments of departed chivalry, and perhaps wax indignant against the plain, matter of fact spirit of the nineteenth century. Yet the men over whose remains you grow sentimental, numbered among them the selfish and intriguing, the gross and earthly minded. Times are changed, but our race changes not, notwithstanding the old assertion—

"Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis."

What man is in the nineteenth century, he was in the fifteenth.

The houses of Valetta are built in the Italian style, and have mostly a balcony attached to the first story. In the evening, the people generally ascend to the flat terraced roofs, to enjoy the sea breeze, which meets with double welcome after the sultry and oppressive heats of the days. Malta is frequently visited by the scirocco, a hot

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burning wind, which completely enervates for the time the whole frame, and renders it incapable of exertion. From mid-day till three in the afternoon, the Maltese close their shops and enjoy the Italian luxury of a siesta.

The Auberges, formerly the residences of the Knights, are still known by the names of the different nations which composed the order. They are buildings of some elegance, but not deserving of any especial notice. Valetta contains many monasteries and nunneries, and the inmates of the former in their sombre dresses and cowls, may be often met in the streets and in the Botanic Garden, situated without the gates, in the suburb called Floriana.

A small distance from the Botanic Garden is a monastery of Capucins, famous for its Carneria or subterranean chapel, the ornaments of which are composed of the relics of mortality, bones and skulls. When a monk dies, his body is eviscerated dried on the terraced roof, and then, clothed in the monastic habit, it is placed in a niche in the Carneria. Several of these spectre-like corpses are to be seen, slowly mouldering away before the eyes of the beholder. One of them holds a scroll con-

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taining a mournful, but neglected truth, "What thou art, I was; what I am, thou shalt be." It has a strange and mournful interest, that old monastery with its long passages and narrow cells. A ghost-like air pervades the corridors, and makes you feel as though a spectre were airing himself behind you. I am not very nervous, but I detected in my mind, a lurking desire to look over my shoulder as the monk who accompanied me related the following tale. One evening, he and several of the inmates had been conversing about the Carneria and its cold and silent dwellers. One after another had told of fearful appearances and strange sounds, disturbing at midnight, the quiet of the monastery. In the midst of these legends, a strange desire seized one of the party. He expressed a wish to descend alone with a light into the abode of the dead. The others attempted to dissuade him, but in vain. With an air of bravado, and a smile of contempt for what he termed the superstition of his companions, he burst from them, and they continued in awe and silence, listening to his retreating footsteps. The door of the Carneria was heard to open, and for a few moments, no sound was heard as the listeners

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gazed fearfully at each other. Suddenly, a piercing shriek rang through the passages of the monastery, and hardly had the echoes ceased, when it was followed by a succession of cries for help. Lights were procured, and the whole convent, with the superior at the head, rushed down to the subterranean chapel. On the steps lay the unfortunate victim of his own temerity, gasping in the agonies of death. A nail in the stairs had caught the hem of his long robe, while ascending to rejoin his companions; and his excited and superstitious fancy had led him to imagine himself in the grasp of the dead. He was carried to his cell, and died the next day. His withered form, clad in monkish attire, now fills one of the niches of the Carneria.

A striking feature about Valetta is the abundance, I may almost say, the exuberance of its fortifications. As you pass out of the gates, you find yourself encompassed by drawbridges, moats, and other strange sounding contrivances of defence. The later Grand-masters seem to have contended with each other who could build the most, and when all this fortifying had reached the acme of perfection, the town was quietly taken without a blow having been struck in its defence. No shame, however,

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to the engineers, for Buonaparte candidly acknowledged, after he had gained admission into Valetta, "that it was well for him, some one from within had opened the door." How intensely he must have despised the degenerate descendants of the men who fought so bravely at Acre and Rhodes, when he beheld them submitting, one by one, to the degradation of tearing the cross from their breasts, as they passed through the gates which a handful of men might have defended against a host. And now I must ask the reader, to mount a calesh and take a drive with me into the country. A calesh is a most original vehicle of its kind, it has two shafts of a singular and primitive construction, protruding from beneath a body resembling somewhat in shape, that of a post chaise. As it jolts along the stony roads of the country, you wish in vain, that you had trusted to the sagacity of a hired saddle-horse, to find his way over the island and not have shut yourself up in a box on wheels. The driver runs by the side of the horse and when weary seats himself on the shafts.

We come now to Casal Mosta, a miserable collection of small houses built in the Oriental style, and displaying in their plain, unornamented ex-

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teriors and latticed windows, a striking contrast to the gay colours, and Italian arrangements of the town habitations. You hear no more the soft, liquid sounds of the sweetest of languages, but in its stead the rough, guttural Maltese, which resembles greatly the Arabic, and is to be considered, if Maltese philologists speak the truth, as the modern form of the ancient Punic or Phœnician. In some parts of the neighbouring island of Gozo, the country people speak a dialect termed "Braik," which is said to be a distinct language from the ordinary Maltese.

The Church of Casal Mosta, will, when completed, be one of the finest in Europe. The story of its erection is somewhat singular. A young priest, a native of the village of Mosta, happened to say his first mass in the Pantheon at Rome. Struck with its peculiar beauty, he made a vow that he would erect a similar structure in his native village. Years rolled on, and the priest became a comparatively wealthy and prosperous man. He practised the most rigid economy, and before he died, succeeded in collecting a large sum, which he bequeathed to trustees for the purpose of erecting the Church. Various addi-

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tions were made to the original fund, and at last, after many delays, the execution of the plan was confided to Mr. Grognet, a Maltese architect of great skill. Mr. Grognet has nearly finished the Church, although the work has been much delayed for want of funds; when finished, it will be one of the most beautiful temples in the world.

Cività Vecchia, or the old city, formerly the capital of the island, possesses a splendid Cathedral, from the roof of which, a most extensive view may be obtained. The Catacombs are inferior in size and interest to those of Rome, but their extent is very great; our guides told us that many persons had been lost in endeavouring to explore some of the more intricate passages. On many of the tombs a cross is sculptured, which seems to indicate the resting place of a Christian. Perhaps the early professors of our Faith held their meetings here during seasons of persecution.

A cave containing the statue of St. Paul is pointed out as the abode of the Apostle during his residence at Malta. Publius, who is mentioned in the Acts as the chief man of the island, is said to have been the first Bishop. Many of

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the Maltese peasantry can repeat the names of the various chief pastors of the island, from Publius to the present Archbishop.

I visited St. Paul's Bay, and was much struck with the strong resemblance which it bears to the place described as the scene of his shipwreck in the Acts. Nothing in fact, can be plainer than that Malta was the Melita of the Sacred historian, and yet men have questioned even this. Our age seems to find great satisfaction in doubting. Perhaps, it would be happier, if it could believe a little more.

The remains of Casal Crendi did not much interest me. They consist of the outline of a Phœnician or a Carthaginian temple, with several chambers attached. The Punic race has done little for mankind. A nation of traders, they seem to have selfishly confined themselves to their own peculiar objects of traffic and gain. They have had their reward in great national prosperity as long as they continued a nation, and in oblivion ever since. They did not choose to remember the claims of posterity, and posterity has revenged itself by forgetting them.

Not far from Crendi there is a kind of chasm

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said to have been formed by the giving way of the roof of a large cavern beneath the surface. It is called Macluba, a word signifying any thing inverted, or, to use a common phrase, turned inside out.

On the southern coast of Gozo is a rock which derives its name from the fungus that is found in great abundance on its summit. This rock is almost perpendicular, and is separated from the mainland by a narrow channel of about fifty feet in breadth. The mode of transit adopted is curious, and seems rather precarious. Two stout ropes are extended across the channel in parallel lines, thus connecting the rock to the land. From these slackened ropes, a box of oblong form is suspended by rings, and furnished with a rope attached to the outer end, by which it may be drawn across. A Maltese gets inside this box, and conveys himself to the rock, where he fastens the end of what I may call the tow line. The box is then sent back to receive the enterprizing traveller, who, after submitting meekly to be packed up and disposed of within the smallest possible compass, finds himself gliding swiftly down the slackened ropes till

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he arrives midway. The man on the rock pulls him up the ascending ropes and assists him out of his box, which is somewhat needful after the cramping process before alluded to. The traveller then receives a fungus or two as trophies of his valorous achievement, and not unfrequently finds himself mulcted of a sixpence or more before his guides will allow him to re-enter his box. He returns to the mainland the same way in which he came, and doubtless congratulates himself that he has escaped with an unbroken neck, though the danger is more in appearance than otherwise.

There are many other of the curiosities of Malta which might perhaps deservedly require some notice at my hands. But I feel that the indulgence of my natural inclination to linger a little longer amid scenes where I passed the brightest and happiest hours of my life, would lay me open to the just complaint that I was keeping back the reader from more important and interesting matter.

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CHAPTER III.

English and Foreigners. Dissensions at Malta. The Bishop of Gibraltar. Character of the Maltese. Language. University. The Press of Valetta. Religion. Anecdote of a Preacher. The Priesthood. The Canon and the Beggar. The Knights. Singular species of Duel. The Hospital. The taking of St. Elmo.

It is a general complaint among travelling Englishmen that our nation is not properly estimated by foreigners. Those too, for whom we have expended both treasure and blood, often seem the least disposed to acknowledge the debt, or to manifest any grateful recollection of it. Yet, to assume ourselves the innocent and blameless victims of unmerited dislike, however consoling it may be to the national vanity of the mass, would

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hardly satisfy the inquiries of a candid and philosophic mind into the cause of an alienation so generally admitted. The man who is not utterly blinded by national bigotry, can hardly read on the walls of the Vatican, and even in St. Peter's itself, reflections in English of the most gross and insulting kind on the Papal Government without feeling that some members at least of our country and creed have laid themselves and their nation open to suspicion and dislike. The devout Romanist who repairs with pious veneration to the most sacred of the mysteries of his religion, is both scandalized and shocked to behold St. Peter's converted into an opera-house, and some of the most respectable of our countrymen and countrywomen, using their *lorgnettes*, talking and laughing, with as much carelessness and indifference as they would display at an opera or a ball. Nor is his respect or love for England and the English much improved when he hears what was actually the case a few years ago, that an English lady has placed her lap-dog on one of those consecrated altars, where he believes the presence of God incarnate daily manifests itself. To say that we discredit the doctrine of Transubstantiation is but

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a poor apology for shocking the feelings of those who admit it.

It must be acknowledged, therefore, that improprieties of this kind must have a tendency to create an unfavourable impression concerning us; yet this, I believe, is not the sole cause why we accord so little with our continental neighbours.

We differ *toto cœlo* from every other nation on the face of the earth. No one understands our institutions. They are as unintelligible to the mass of continentals as Shakespeare is. Try, for instance, to make a Frenchman understand the precise character of the Church of England, or of the English Constitution. He would hardly be able to reconcile the pretensions to Protestantism of the former with her authoritative and dogmatic teaching: he would regard the latter as the uninitiated do a piece of complex and intricate machinery. Our social notions, too, are so peculiar. We can do nothing without asking a man to dinner, and our friendship is consummated, like the covenants of old, by eating. The foreigner will only give you *eau sucrée* and a cigar, and he looks upon invitations to dinner as *monstra horrenda*—as a polite way of picking your neigh-

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bour's pocket. At Malta we have the mutual antagonism of the English and the continental enacted on a small scale.

The English merchants who began to establish themselves at Valetta after 1815, were disposed to look with some contempt on the Maltese Baron or Marchese, who, with the blood of the Testa-ferratas in his veins, lived on less than the wages of an ill-paid London clerk. And the Maltese gentleman, repaying the pride of purse with the pride of birth, avoided the society of the foreigner where his claims were not appreciated or his position respected. Religion, too, interfered in the way of union. The sturdy Protestant looked with surprise and contempt on the large wooden images of the saints placed at every street corner, which the devout Maltese saluted as often as he passed by. He was indignant, as a man of business, to encounter daily such crowds of priests, monks, and ecclesiastical idlers, who seemed to have nothing to do but to contemplate and lounge. Moreover, collisions often took place in the streets. The English refused to salute the host when passing in procession, and the mob of Malta endeavoured to enforce compliance. Dis-

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turbances often occurred on this account, for the Maltese are most zealous for the honour of their religion. I need scarcely say, therefore, that they retaliated the contempt of the foreigner with the most cordial hatred of him and his heresy. Nor was this feeling softened or alleviated by the well-meant but injudicious attempts at conversion which were made by some dissenting societies.

Yet, inimical as he may be to our race generally, let us give the Maltese fair play. When conciliated and treated properly, he can show attachment and affection even to the cold impassive sons of the North. The excellent Bishop of Gibraltar has done, and is doing, much to bring the Maltese and the English into friendly contact, and I have never heard his Lordship's name mentioned by respectable and well-educated islanders, without hearing it coupled with the strongest expressions of respect and esteem. His Lordship has done much for Malta, and, if some of his benevolent and well-meaning endeavours have not met with the success they deserved, the fault must not be ascribed to want of good-will, but want of power in him who planned them.

The character of the Maltese seems, as our

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Transatlantic neighbours would say, a cross between the Asiatic and the southern European. The dark eyes, the brown complexion, the language, and the girdle commonly worn by the peasantry, tell of an Eastern origin; but there is a degree of liveliness and fire, and certain scintillations of taste and genius, which claim an Italian descent. Like all insular people, the Maltese feels a pardonable pride in the place of his birth, which he dignifies with the high sounding title of Fior del Mondo, though its barren and rocky soil can scarcely produce a flower.

Though the common language of Malta is a dialect of the Punic or Arabic, the law proceedings of the different courts are carried on in Italian, a tongue perfectly unintelligible to the great mass of the people. This might, perhaps, be of less consequence, if the Maltese were not a most litigious race. Next to the clergy, rank the advocates, in point of numbers. It is easy, therefore, to see that law, written and administered in an unknown language, must give room for a thousand quibbles and quiddities which add to the number of law-suits, and benefit no one but the advocates. Another consideration is, that this

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marked preference for Italian on the part of the Government tends to retard the progress of the English language among the people. But few speak it, and still fewer read it intelligibly.

The similarity of language attracts them rather to the Italians and to Italian literature, than to ourselves or our authors. Thus, even when they do meet, the English and Maltese must encounter each other on neutral ground. All communication must pass in an idiom with which neither are perfectly familiar. The literature of Italy, too, can bear no comparison with our own for copiousness and richness. Works of poetry, fiction, or devotion may be found in it, but scarcely any on science or philosophy. And it may be questioned whether even, on the three subjects alluded to, the tone of Italian writers is so pure and unalloyed as might be wished. The Maltese, indeed, are not literary. Business, gossip, and the siesta, take up their time fully. But they have no educational establishments, and those who wish their sons to know more than their ancestors, send them either to the Jesuits in Sicily or to the Colleges in France. In the former, they do not imbibe much liking for the heretical yoke of Eng-

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land, in the latter they acquire infidel notions and make themselves acquainted with the morality of Eugene Sue and Georges Sand. But, with all this, there is an institution at Valetta which claims the pompous title of the University of Malta. It possesses Greek, Hebrew, Mathematical, and Arabic Professors, who are paid less than the wages of a respectable housemaid. A few boys assemble daily in the rooms of the University, but the whole place looks as gloomy and deserted as the halls of Oxford and Cambridge during a long vacation. Ever since the commencement of our *régime* in Malta, there has been an uninterrupted succession of changes. Rector has followed rector, and regulations, three months old, have been made to give way to fresh ones, until the more sensible of the Maltese lost all confidence in the institution, and the University has become a theme for derision and ridicule.

Valetta, though far less than Calais or Dover, boasts of a number of newspapers; the editors of which supply the dearth of news by animated and sometimes ungrammatical attacks on each other. When the freedom of the press was claimed for Malta, the Duke of Wellington said

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something I believe about the equal propriety of conceding it to the deck of a man of war. Yet it was carried, and if the result has not been so favourable as might have been expected, we certainly are not to blame. We are the sufferers, for the Maltese use our gift to abuse us, and a young Malta has taken its place among the other juvenilities of the age, whose chief attempt at demonstrating its principles, has been a great effort to look ferocious and Italian. The exiles from Italy, to whom we gave refuge, repaid our hospitality by inculcating republican theories among the Maltese,* while a Jesuit Padre insinuated from the pulpit of one of the churches, that no government unsanctioned by the Pope could prosper, or ought to be obeyed, which declarations he followed up by sundry lucubrations in the Jesuit organ of Valetta.

Malta is a land of churches and of priests. The former are magnificent, and costly in their interiors, but as to the exterior, they seem to share, what I must always call the bareness of

* I allude to transactions in 1842 and 1844. Towards the close of the latter year the Italian exiles were prohibited by the Local Government of Malta from writing in the newspapers.

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Italian church architecture. But I must own that I am an enthusiast for Gothic, and therefore due allowance should be made for my declaration. The priests almost outnumber the lay population of the town, to say nothing of the monks. The bishop ordains any one who can prove he has a small income, I believe not more than sixpence or a shilling a day. The consequence is, a vast influx of men into the clerical profession, who find no work ready for them, and the sloth and indolence of which this has been the necessary result, has not improved the character of the body. Unquestionably, many talented and worthy men may be found among them, but their number is not legion, and in a profession where conduct and deportment undergo the strictest scrutiny, things that might escape censure in others, are not easily passed over or forgotten.

At the corners of the streets or lanes of Valetta, you perceive huge images of the Virgin and of the Saints, arrayed in gorgeous apparel, and having a lamp burning before them. The Maltese touch them respectfully as they pass, and then press their hand to their lips, a mode of salutation, common among the idolaters of early times. To

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this practice it is possible the book of Job alludes,* when it says, "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand." Such indeed is the extravagant veneration which the Maltese pay to images and pictures, that a German priest, a man of great talent and piety, exclaimed after he had seen Valetta, almost in the words of St. Luke, "Surely the city is wholly given up to idolatry." Much of the blame, however, of this must rest upon the character of the people as well as of he clergy. An able preacher was once selected to deliver the usual Lent sermons from the pulpit of St. John's. A large congregation assembled at about six o'clock in the morning to hear him. He began by dwelling forcibly on the necessity of contrition and repentance, but he found his auditors yawning and sleepy. Suddenly, he changed the theme, and began a wonderful legend of some saint who walked a dozen miles with his head in his hand. Every body rubbed their eyes, neighbour nudged neighbour; and the legend was listened to with marked attention, while the moral instruction

* Job xxxi. 26, 27.

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produced a most soporific effect. The southern mind must always have truth in parables, and religion in ceremonies. It can never tolerate the pure abstraction.

The celibate life professed by the priesthood, enables them not only to avoid expense, but to accumulate wealth. This generally descends to the nephews and nieces, who supply the place of children to a race of bachelors. It would scarcely be fair to assume, as a general rule, that the single state produces and encourages the love of money, but most of the Maltese ecclesiastics are noted for their saving propensities.

Some of the wealthiest of the clergy are the canons of St. John's, as the collegiate church was well endowed by the knights. A member of the chapter was once wending his way to vespers, when, as he was toiling painfully up one of the streets of stairs leading to the church, he was accosted by a mendicant, who, in a low whining tone, besought his reverence to give him alms. The canon, who was not the most liberal of men, attempted to brush by, but in vain. "*Padre mio,*" whined the beggar, "'for the love of the Virgin, give me a shilling?" The canon gasped, threw up his eyes, and ejacu-

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lated, "Santa Maria!" with double emphasis. "Will you give me sixpence then?" rejoined the beggar. "Go along with you," said the canon. "A penny at least?" "No!" "A farthing perhaps." "Not a grain," testily replied the priest. The mendicant changed his ground. "Holy father, will you give me your blessing?" "Ah!" said the canon, brightening up, "that is another thing, kneel down my son." "No," replied the beggar, "I will not; I asked you for a grain, and you refused me. Now, if your blessing were worth a grain you would not bestow it, and so *Addio, Padre mio.*"

Malta abounds of course with reminiscences of the knights: they seem to have been much beloved, though in many respects they held the reins of government with a tight hand. No Maltese, however respectable, could pass the palace of the Grand Master, without raising his hat. No native of the island could enter the order, although the highest dignities connected with the church were open to him. The consequences of a life of celibacy professed by men in the flower of their age, and with much leisure time on their hands, did not operate favourably on the morality of the

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islanders. Concubinage was common, though strictly forbidden by the statutes of the order.

Among the most peculiar of the customs of the cavalieri, was the regulation with regard to duelling, which recalled some of the practices of early chivalry. The parties who quarrelled were to repair to the next street, unsheath their swords, and fight out their duel in public. But at the command of a priest, a lady, or a senior knight, they were enjoined to desist, and to be completely reconciled on the spot. Of course such encounters seldom terminated fatally. An old Maltese lady told me that her interference had often been requested by the friends of the belligerent parties, and in no single instance had it ever failed. An aged Maltese priest averred that he had often been knocked up at twelve o'clock at night to stop the warlike proceedings of some of the younger cavalieri.

The government of Malta, during the sojourn of the order, was vested in the Grand Council, who exercised a check on the proceedings of their chief. That sovereign was obliged to swear at his inauguration, faithfully to observe and respect the liberties of the Maltese and their ancient institu-

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tions, an oath, which was, upon the whole, religiously observed. Of the numerous Grand Masters who presided over the destinies of the order since its removal to Malta, the annals only record the name of one who acted with tyranny and bad faith. I have heard, however, complaints that the exercise of the judicial functions was subject to a certain control; and that the Maltese judges were mostly creatures of the Grand Master. Yet, with all their faults, the Maltese remembers his old masters with regret. Old men will talk sorrowfully of the times of "the religion," when the gallies returned to Valetta laden with the spoils of the hated infidel, when the crescent was hawled down amid the shouts of the Maltese sailors, and the standard of St. John floated proudly in the breeze.

The Knights of Malta still retained an ancient vestige of their former occupation, as attendants on the sick, in the hospital, which they erected at Valetta. With a pardonable ostentation, they waited themselves on the infirm inmates, and conveyed their food and medicines in silver utensils. A large amount of plate belonging to this charitable institution, fell into the hands of

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the French, when they obtained possession of the island.

Perhaps the most interesting part of Malta, as connected with the history of the knights, is the extreme point of the promontory, called Mt. Xibaras, on which stands the comparatively modern Fort of St. Elmo. It was witness to a feat of self sacrifice and chivalry, which can hardly find a parallel since the days of Leonidas.

At the commencement of the year 1565, the celebrated Suliman filled the Ottoman throne, a prince renowned for his success in war, and his indelible hatred of the Christian name. The capture of a Turkish vessel, belonging to one of his favorites, had filled him with indignation against the Knights of Malta, which was still more increased by the complaints of a numerous crowd, who beset him on his passage to the Mosque, and demanded, with loud cries, satisfaction for the losses they had sustained from the enterprize, and restless activity of the galleys of the order. The voice of his people found an echo in the bosom of the monarch, and Suliman determined to fit out a fleet and army, that should reduce the island, and totally exterminate its

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defenders. One hundred and fifty-nine gallies, received on board an armament of 30,000 men, the flower of the Turkish troops, and on the 18th May, 1565, these formidable invaders appeared in sight of Malta. Besides these, their commander, Mustapha Pasha, was promised the valuable aid of the Viceroy of Algiers, the inveterate enemy of the knights, whose prowess by sea, he had proved on many occasions.

The Grand Master, Lavalette, could only muster about 700 knights, and a motley force of nearly 8,500 men, composed of the servants at arms, the mercenary troops in the pay of the order, and some peasants, and natives of the island, whom attachment to the order, and fear of the sanguinary cruelties of the Turks, had impelled to take up arms. With these inadequate numbers, he entrenched himself in the modern town of Burgo, to the south of the great harbour, having the Fort of St. Angelo, which had been strongly garrisoned, between his forces and the promontory of Xibaras. The latter place became now of great importance, from its central position between the two harbours, into one of which it was necessary for the Turks to penetrate. The

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Commander Duguarras, with sixty knights, and a company of infantry, shut themselves up in the Fort of St. Elmo, determined to maintain it to the last, even at the cost of their lives. It was there the Turks made their first attack. On the 24th of May, the Pasha commanded a general assault, but he was met with the utmost gallantry, and repelled with a heavy loss. Attack after attack was made in vain, but the number of the defenders decreased daily, and notwithstanding the succours dispatched from time to time, by the Grand Master, it became evident that the Fort must shortly fall into the hands of the assailants. At length, the Turks, having succeeded in penetrating a short distance into the mouth of the great harbour, prevented any reinforcements from reaching the devoted garrison, who thus abandoned to their fate, determined to prepare themselves for that death, which appeared to all inevitable. The little band received with devotion and fervour, the last Sacraments of the Church, and then, embracing each other, they repaired to the breach, bearing along with them the wounded in chairs, and there awaited the assault of their enemies. On the morning of the

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23rd of June, the Pasha gave the signal to attack, the conflict was sharp and decisive, and the fall of the last knight, covered with wounds, was succeeded by the planting of the crescent on the ramparts of St. Elmo.

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CHAPTER IV.

The East. Fellow-passengers. Cape Matapan. Syra. Greek Church. Priesthood. Smyrna. The Streets. Bazaars. Mosque. Holy Shoes. Misadventure. Departure from Smyrna. Constantinople.

At Malta, one seems to be on the frontier line which separates the east from the west. It is a kind of neutral ground, on which the habits of the Orient mingle with the usages of Europe. In leaving it, therefore, I felt that I had quitted for a time, that might be more or less prolonged, all the associations and customs of past years. Nor can I tell, whether in doing so, the emotions of pleasure or regret most predominated. The

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feeling that a new world was opening before me, was sobered by the reflection, that the old one was fast passing away, never, perhaps, to be beheld again by me.

The traveller for mere amusement, can leave without regret, scenes that he may shortly anticipate to welcome once more; but one whose lot is fixed in the country to which he is journeying, feels that the uncertainty of return, clothes with interest each receding object. I could not watch, with mere indifference, the distant towers of Valetta, as our vessel moved on, and they became gradually more indistinct, and soon disappeared entirely from view.

For years, the east has exercised a mysterious influence over the western mind. It has been the *El Dorado* of the imagination, and still continues to captivate, and allure the fancy, in spite of the prosaic, and matter of fact attempts of modern travellers to dissipate the illusion, and to destroy the charm. The pages of Marco Polo, and Mandeville, represent the east of our boyhood, with its various marvels, its mysteries and its magnificence, but the efforts and energies of their successors have been used to demonstrate that Oriental

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gold is but tinsel, after all, and that its mysteries, and its marvels, are as shadowy and unreal as the tales which amuse the uncriticising fancy of childhood. Truth is sometimes unpleasant, and we do not always thank the hand, that tears down the enchanted veil, and shews us squalidness and misery, in the place of the gilded visions of imagination.

My anticipations were, perhaps, less brilliant than those of the untravelled generally are, for during my stay at Malta, I had heard much of the region to which I was going, and some of my illusions were beginning to fade away. But, still there remained much to expect, and to wish for, and it was, therefore, upon the whole, rather gratifying to find one-self once more *en route.*

My *compagnons de voyage* were as mixed a crew as one might wish to see. There were three old Jews with dirty gaberdines, and still dirtier faces, whose grey, uncombed beards, hung raggedly down almost to their waists. Their cunning eyes, as stealthy as the glances of a cat, gleamed wilily from beneath their high-arched eye-brows. They seemed every moment to anticipate being either deceived by craft, or plundered by violence. I

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could have pictured each of them in the position of Isaac of York, eyeing ruefully, and suspiciously, the hot glowing bars of his dungeon grate, and struggling internally with fear of pain, and love of gold. They appeared like Ishmaelites of the town, every man against them, and they against every one. A hard featured, stern looking Monk, with the aspect of an Inquisitor, gazed with undisguised contempt on the children of Abraham, several of his brethren were near him, all going to be employed in the Levantine Missions. One or two Oriental physiognomies mingled with the group, on the main deck, looking awkward, and by no means at home, in their semi-European dress.

An Italian artist, with his sketch book under his arm, was going to settle at Constantinople, for he said, that in consequence of the progress of civilization, the Turks might require his services as a miniature painter. Another countryman of his, who had picked up a smattering of physic somewhere, intended to bestow on the unfortunate Infidels, the fruits of his medical science. He owned he knew little of drugs, but "*che fare*" times were hard, and he must live, even by other

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people's deaths. An interesting exile sought for that liberty under the paternal Government of Turkey, which was denied him under the equally paternal *régime* of Austria. One man was going to teach the Turks to ride, another intended to be their instructor in the art of war. Verily, the poor Ottomans had reason to exclaim, "save me from my friends," or rather from those who desire to become such. Then there was the usual *quota* of travelling Englishmen, looking stern and dissatisfied at every body, a shabbily dressed German prince, with I do not know how many ancestors; and some gay and lively Frenchmen, who seemed disposed to treat everything with a shrug and a *ma foi*. An enthusiastic American was bent on turning Sancta Sophia into a Presbyterian meeting house, and had no doubt of success, although, like George Primrose, he seemed to have forgotten, that in order that he might teach the Turks Christianity, it was necessary that they should first teach him Turkish.

But we are in sight of land. Telescopes are in requisition immediately. Guide books are produced, and referred to with much anxiety. A large map is spread over the covering of the

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hatchway, and the report that land is in sight, seems to stir up every body to redoubled cheerfulness and activity. Young tourists, from college, strain their eyes, and recall all their classical recollections. The deep blue eyes of the German beam with enthusiasm, the Frenchmen become silent for a moment; young ladies divide their attention between Lord Byron and the horizon; the Englishman lays down his newspaper; while our American friend ejaculates nasally, "that's Greece, I guess."

And Greece it is, as we ascertain from the Captain, or at least, a very barren part of it, ycleped Cape Matapan. It is a rocky headland, jutting out into the sea, respectable from its connexions, but by no means interesting in itself, and we look upon it as we should upon the ninety-ninth cousin of Napoleon, or some other great man. On the declivity towards the sea, a few stones piled together, was pronounced to be a hermitage, but it was uninhabited. Perhaps, the hermit had left in disgust, at the modern innovation of steamers; perhaps, he was tired of contemplating nothing save *pontus et aër*; but all seemed to agree that he had not been visible of late years. And now we are entering the Archipelago.

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"The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece,
Where burning Sappho lived and sang."

But we saw no burning Sappho, only a few Greek fisherwomen, who, with their long dishevelled locks covering their shoulders, gazed at us as we moved by them. At length, Syra was pronounced in sight, and we soon discerned its cone shaped rock emerging from the waters. We anchored in face of the small town, situated at the foot of the mountain, the higher part of which is inhabited chiefly by Greek Catholics, or those members of the Greek Church, who acknowledge the supremacy, and submit to the sway of the Roman Pontiff.

A dilapidated flag, placed on the roof of the quarantine establishment, announced that we were on the point of entering the jurisdiction of King Otho, upon whom one of our English fellow travellers pronounced no very flattering eulogiums, as we entered the close and filthy streets of his dominions. It seems to be an indisputable axiom, with many of our errant countrymen, that the Government of a foreign country is responsible for every thing, even for the ill-washed faces, and ragged garments of its subjects. The

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southern nations are not generally noted for cleanliness, although one might expect that the heat would render the cold bath a pleasing and agreeable resort. Yet the use of the cold element, is not common even in Turkey, where the ablutions are performed in a room filled with steam, and with almost boiling water.

The dress of the Greeks of Syra, was of a very mixed character. Some of the loungers, whom we had encountered on landing, wore a bad imitation of the European costume, others retained the kilts, buskins, and jackets of their native land, while a third party appeared in modern Egyptian vestments. The two latter were, certainly, more graceful than the former, yet the traveller, who has worn or beheld the flowing robes of Asia, will not be easily reconciled to their tight compression of the arms and legs. The Greek, or Albanian jacket struck one as being more comfortless, although, perhaps, more ornamental than the dress coat of Europe, while the buskins, although they present an elegant and showy appearance, must yield, in point of ease, to the loose, unfettered drawers of Turkey.

The streets of Syra are very steep, owing to

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the nature of the ground on which the town is built. Its population, which exceeds 13,000, is larger than the first view of the houses would seem to warrant, but it appears credible enough, after you have traversed the various ins and outs, the turnings and the bends, which are most numerous and complicated. After some difficulty, we reached the house of the Rev. Mr. Hildner, a German Clergyman, in the service of the English Church Missionary Society. Mr. H. has opened his schools, under the sanction of Government, and is on good terms with the authorities, both civil and Ecclesiastical. His establishment consists of a school for boys, and another for girls, and many of his pupils are children of the most respectable Greek families.

It seemed strange to hear little Greek girls of six or seven years of age, reading and translating with ease and fluency, the pages of Herodotus and Xenophon. But the similarity of the modern dialect to the ancient Hellenic, renders this comparatively easy. One of our party, however, who piqued himself upon his classical knowledge, was unsuccessful in his attempts to converse in the old dialect, with a little girl of ten years old, who

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professed to understand and speak Hellenic, but the unintelligibility on both sides, was probably occasioned by the difference of pronunciation. The modern Greeks pronounce *Beta*, like *v*, and *Upsilon* like *i*, or *y*, while they give the *Chi*, a guttural aspiration, like that of the German *ch*. The diphthongs too, are nearly all pronounced alike, so that the most eminent English scholar, would have some difficulty in recognising by ear, even the well-known verses of Homer, if they were read aloud to him.

From the schools, we proceeded to the Greek Church, a small, and by no means inelegant building, standing in the midst of a species of quadrangle, on the four sides of which were the dwellings of the priests. They were all dressed in a kind of long dark Cassock, reaching to the ancles, over which was thrown a gown of black cloth. Their hair was worn long, and surmounted by a small round cap. Every one was bearded, for the beard is considered all over the East, a necessary appendage to the Priestly office. A Syrian Ecclesiastic whom I knew at Malta, remarked of the late Bishop Alexander, that he was a very good man, but that he had no beard, and hinted that

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this latter disqualification for Episcopacy, was by no means a light one.

The clergy of the Greek Church are permitted to marry while in Deacons' orders, but their bishops and monks are unmarried. If, however, the wife of a papas dies, he cannot give her a successor, and it is said, that the knowledge of this gains for her a larger amount of respect and attention than is usually the lot of her sex in the East. A friend of mine, who had resided some time in Syra, was surprised on entering the house of one of the principal priests, to find the reverend papas washing with his own hands, the linen of the household. On enquiring the reason, the papas replied, "I do this to save my wife labour, that she may live the longer, for you know, oh Kyrie, that the law of our Church does not permit me to have another, and I wish to keep this as long as I can."

Preaching forms rarely a portion of the Greek service, the people being instructed in their moral duties, chiefly through the medium of the confessional. Confession is one of the Seven Sacraments which the Greeks hold in common with the Latins, but among the former, the priest is forbidden to question the penitent, and the latter is

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not bound to reveal everything, but merely such offences as seem to require ghostly counsel and advice. In the Greek Church, the altar, which is square in form, and strongly resembles our own, is separated from the nave by a wooden screen, richly decorated and hung with pictures of the Saviour and the saints. These portraits have frequently the heads, arms, or hands, formed of thin silver plates, which are fastened to the canvass, and present a curious medley, half-image, half-picture. The pulpit, which, although rarely used, forms generally part of the church furniture, is always surmounted by the figure of a dove, with extended wings, said to represent the Holy Ghost. The part screened off from the choir, is termed the Holy of Holies, and strictly speaking, should never be entered by a layman, but this rule is not always observed.

Leaving the church, we re-embarked, and in a few hours were entering the gulph of Smyrna. Its shores are formed by two ranges of mountains which unite just above the city, in a kind of semicircle. The eye wanders with pleasure and interest along the thickly wooded declivities, till its view rests upon the dark groves of cypress

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which indicate the site of the cemeteries, the cities of the dead. At the foot of Mount Pagus, is seen the modern town, extending itself along the Eastern shore of the gulf, and marking by its domes and minarets, the triumph of the crescent over the cross.

Smyrna is generally the first Oriental city that greets the eye of the wanderer in Eastern climes, nor does its aspect disappoint the poetical and romantic visions which he may have felt disposed to cherish. The gay colours, and almost Italian exterior of the houses on the quay, conceal the narrow and somewhat filthy streets of the interior, while the really elegant shapes of the domes and minarets, which tower above them, delight as much by their novelty, as by their intrinsic beauty. As the eye wanders over the mass of houses, it rests upon the rich and luxuriant gardens which border the town, the picturesque ruins that crown the summit of Mount Pagus, and the not inelegant outlines of the villages in the environs.

Nor is the illusion dispelled when on landing, the new comer finds himself among the Oriental crowd and gazes, with a mingled feeling of amaze-

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ment and admiration, on the rich flowing robes of the East, or the gay and glittering costume of the Albanians or Egyptians. As he proceeds along, the narrow streets with their latticed houses, excite his attention, which is perhaps, more rudely solicited by a string of loaded camels, whose driver jostles him unceremoniously aside as he passes. Interruptions, indeed, the traveller must expect at every step. Some of these will almost recall to his memory, if he be classical, Horace's humorous accounts of similar troubles in the streets of Rome. A carpenter, with a beam on his shoulder, assails you in front, a file of Turkish soldiers take you in the rear. A newly arrived Englishman in Constantinople, was once cooly pushed out of the way with the butt end of a musket, for Turkish soldiers are not prone to sacrifice much to the courtesies of life. You stand engaged in mute admiration of some ancient pillar placed in a modern wine-shop, when a yell like the cry of a despairing Afrite bursts on your ear, and you rush madly into the embraces of a stout portly Armenian banker, very much to his surprise and your own.

Yet, if heedless of these little inconveniences,

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you make your way into the Bazaar, and establish yourself on one of the stools in front of any of the coffee-houses, you will there be enabled to satiate yourself to the full with Eastern peculiarities and costumes. Inhaling the fumes of what you may call, if you please, the pipe of contemplation, you will not want objects to attract your attention, and inspire you with interest. Above you is the arched roof of the Bazaar, gracefully adorned with Arabesque painting, and gay with many and brilliant devices. Around you are the shops of which you have so often read in boyhood's chosen classic, the Arabian Nights. How astonished you are to find instead of the large room usually dignified by the name of a shop in London and Paris, its Oriental namesake assuming the form and dimensions of an English stall, or of one of those travelling places of merchandize, which one meets with in one's peregrinations at home, laden with fruit or cheap china. The Eastern shop is merely a small square recess in the wall, having a board projecting forth a little way, which serves the double purpose of a counter and a seat. On this the merchant sits cross-legged, smoking his never failing pipe. You feel in want of something, and would fain have

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dealings with him, but you are in a land where business is not transacted with the same undignified and uncomfortable rapidity as in England or America.

You make your salutation with much ceremony to the merchant, which he returns in the same manner. Mutual enquiries respecting each other's health then take place, after which the merchant if respectable, sends for pipes and coffee, from the next coffee-house, or if poor, he takes the pipe from his lips, wipes the mouth-piece on his sleeve, and hands it to you with a low bow, pressing at the same time, his hand to his heart. Inclining your head gently, you accept the proffered kindness, and after some indifferent conversation venture to hint at the object of your visit. The goods are brought forth and displayed upon the board, while you make your choice. And, after a little haggling, but very little if your tradesman is a Turk, you pay your money, and with mutual salutations depart rather with the air of one who has received, than one who has conferred a favour.

The crowd of persons passing and repassing in the Bazaars, is very great, and mingled with them are numbers of the fair sex, enveloped in veils,

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or rather wrappers of blue stuff, which reach about half way down the long yellow boots, which the Turkish ladies always wear abroad. Their faces are partially concealed by another veil, or cloth of white linen, which is so arranged as to leave visible, only the eyes and the upper half of the nose. They have an unpleasant ghost-like appearance, and reminded me almost of an old school-boy acquaintance, the Ghoul wife Amina, who was surprised by her husband while devouring a corpse in the neighbouring cemetery.

As we were rambling through the streets, a ragged looking Jew came up and offered to be our guide, for a consideration of course. He was the first Israelite I had seen dressed in the Oriental garb, and it harmonised well with his peculiar features and eastern physiognomy. Go where they will, the Hebrews bear about with them the indelible marks of their Asiatic origin. The same love of decoration, the same taste for gaudy colours; yea, the same appetite for fried fish, distinguish the inhabitants of Damascus and the denizens of Petticoat Lane. I even fancied, on entering the Jewish quarter of Smyrna, that I recognised that peculiar odour which characterises also those

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parts of London devoted to the sale of old clothes.

As foreigners are allowed in Smyrna to visit the mosques, we determined to avail ourselves of this toleration, and desired our conductor to get us admission. Fresh from Europe, we did not think of the prejudices entertained by the Mohammedans with regard to Jews, or anticipate that we should incur the wrath of the faithful, by introducing a Chefoot into the precincts of one of their places of worship. We were soon reminded of whom we had to deal with.

At the porch of the Great Mosque, the Jew stopped, and entered into conversation with a stout good-natured looking Mahommedan, who, after a little whispering, consented to admit us. We were ordered to pull off our shoes, and this we were quite willing to do, but unfortunately a lady of our party had on a pair of tightly laced boots, and the lace got into a knot as she was endeavouring in great haste to unfasten it, so that they could not be taken off. Here was a dilemma. The lady could not be left in the street, like the heroine of some old knightly romance, surrounded by ferocious-looking Saracens, and she was also

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very anxious to see the interior of a mosque. The Jew offered our stout friend, who was a kind of sexton there, a small douceur, but he shook his head. The boots were tried again, but the tangled lace was inexorable, and there seemed to be but little chance of our gaining admittance.

At last, one of the standers-by recollected that a great devotee, one Hadjee Mohammed Ibn Abdallah, had left at his decease a pair of holy slippers to the mosque, which slippers were said to inherit the odour of sanctity. Now the shoes of so great a man were evidently better than even the feet or stockings of a female Kafir, and therefore it was agreed that our fair companion should encase her feet, boots and all, in the holy slippers of the late Hadjee. The slippers were brought; they were very dilapidated, very dirty, and if the odour which exhaled from them was the odour of sanctity, it was certainly not very grateful to the nose. The lady gazed at the holy shoes for some time, with indecision mingled with apprehension, and probably with a sort of conviction that had she been at home, she would have called her maid to take them up with the tongs and deposit them within the dust-hole; however, there was no help

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for it, and so, with an air of resignation, she thrust her feet into them, and entered the mosque.

We found the interior a lofty and spacious apartment, the marble floor of which was covered with matting. In one of the walls looking in the direction of Mecca, was the kublah, or niche, towards which the worshippers turned their faces in prayer. By the niche was the mimber, or pulpit, whence the mollah delivered his weekly sermon. From the roof was suspended a thin iron ring, around which was attached a circle of small glass lamps; several large ostrich eggs and horse tails depended, attached above by brass chains. In fact, nothing can be plainer than the Mohammedan houses of prayer. They rarely have any other decorations but those which I have mentioned, excepting, perhaps, the ornamental writing round the cornices, consisting of sentences from the Koran; among these, the profession of faith, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God," appears generally the most conspicuous.

On one occasion, a respectable Greek of Constantinople paid a visit of curiosity to one of the mosques of the capital. He was acquainted with

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Arabic, and was endeavouring to decipher the writing on the walls; without dreaming of the consequences, he read half aloud the fatal words, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God." Two Turks who were standing by overheard him, and immediately arrested and conveyed him before the Cadi, who gave sentence that he had uttered the creed of Islam, and must therefore make a public profession of the Mohammedan religion in court, or lose his head. Overcome with astonishment and terror, the trembling Greek repeated mechanically the fatal words which sealed him as an apostate for ever. Two nights afterwards he fled to Venice, where, for aught I know to the contrary, he still resides.

Having seen all that was worthy of notice in the mosque, we prepared to leave it, but we were not fortunate enough to depart in peace; it may be that the shade of Hadjee Mohammed was hovering over the spot, determined to have vengeance for the disrespect and profanation inflicted on his holy shoes: from a side door there entered, in a great rage, the mollah himself, who, rushing up to our Hebrew conductor, overwhelmed him with epithets of abuse. B— endeavoured to pacify the

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angry man of the law, but in vain; he slapped the Jew's face till it rang again, and insisted upon his walking outside instantly. B— thought it best to order him to wait for us without, and this moderation rather appeased the mollah, who began a kind of grumbling apology for his violence, adding, however, that Jew dogs were only made to be kicked and spit upon, as a kind of prelude, no doubt, to the tortures of Gehennam which they shall receive in the next world; the Koran says they will be far below the Christians. We did not feel disposed to enter into conversation on the matter, and left the mosque.

We rejoined the poor beaten Jew in the street, who complained greatly of the persecution suffered by his people at the hands of Mohammedans. The Jews in Smyrna have their separate quarter, the gates of which are locked every night. Once a fire broke out in that part, and the guards, through malice or design, left the gates closed, so that many Jews lost their lives.

The environs of Smyrna present pictures of the most romantic beauty, and afford an agreeable contrast to the dark, narrow, and dirty lanes of the town. Most of the European merchants have

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their country houses in the neighbouring villages of Boudjar, Bournabat, and Sidi Kiouy. Through the gardens or plantations which arise at the back of the town, glide the limpid waves of the Meles, on whose banks, perhaps, Homer wandered when he composed his deathless songs; a rude arch of stone, termed generally the caravan bridge, crosses the Meles not far from the foot of the hill or Acropolis, on which the citadel once stood. In its vicinity are several coffee-houses, which receive the holiday makers of the city on Sundays and other festivals; when may be seen in groups the phlegmatic Turk, dozing over his pipe and seeing visions in the bright tinted clouds; the gay chattering Greek, and the grave Armenian who seldom speaks except for a consideration; together with the tight swathed and bandaged forms of the sons of Frangistan, who, with miserable taste, prefer generally their monkeyfied costume to the loose, comfortable, and elegant attire of the Oriental.

We left Smyrna in the afternoon, and when I woke the next morning, a general clatter and bustle seemed to announce that we were nearing the imperial city, even Stamboul itself. I hurried on my habiliments and rushing upon deck beheld a vision of

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the most glorious and exquisite beauty, far surpassing anything that the most poetical imagination could conceive. I feel my powers of description too feeble and too unsatisfactory to paint the impressions which that scene of more than fairy splendour stamped upon my soul. On my left were the seven towers, the ancient fortifications, the palace of the seraglio with its gardens, and innumerable domes and minarets gilded by the rays of the scarcely risen sun. Beyond was the hilly suburb of Pera, with the cypresses of its cemetery, the Champ des Morts, waving mournfully in the morning breeze, and the ornamented fountain of Top Khana, with hundreds of swift cayiques* skimming lightly over the placid waves of the Bosphorus. To the right were the Princes' Islands, with their richly wooded summits and ancient monastery, the gulf of Nicomedia, and the gloomy looking cemeteries of Scutari, while almost united at the back of the picture, rose the mountains of Europe and Asia, winding and entwining themselves in such a manner as to seem one vast semicircle of hills, covered with kiosks and vine-

* Turkish boats used on the Bosphorus which are lighter and more elegant than even the wherries of the Thames.

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yards, and adorned equally by the luxuriance of nature and the mechanical elegance of art.

We disembarked, and were soon toiling up the narrow lanes of Pera, attended by a couple of Turkish hamals or porters, who conducted us and our baggage in safety to the hospitable portals of Madame Josephine, who herself appeared at ner gate, with a good-humoured countenance, radiant with smiles, to welcome us to Constantinople and to the Belle-vue.

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CHAPTER V.

Departure from Constantinople. Samsoun. Mohammed Aga. St. Basil. Ancient Monasticism of Pontus. Cazal Kiouy. Nocturnal Invaders. Ladik. The Ramadan. Robbers. Oppression of the Government. Amasia. Ina Bazaar. Anecdote of a Pasha. Turkal. Tokat. Colonization.

CONSTANTINOPLE has been so frequently and so ably described, that I deem it almost needless to say anything respecting it, except perhaps to express a warm admiration of the romantic beauty of its environs, and to extol the many opportunities which it affords a stranger of being initiated, at a cheap rate, into the manners of the East. Not indeed that living or lodgings are reasonable in cost, but a sojourn in the capital

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encroaches less upon your pocket or your ease, than an excursion in the provinces would do, and you are enabled to keep up some of your European associations, which must be abandoned entirely, in the purely Oriental regions of the country. It is a mistake to imagine that the civilization of the metropolis has made its way into the rural districts, or that hotels and clean linen are ready to welcome those who venture even twenty miles from the gates of Constantinople. The traveller in the interior must carry with him his bed, his cooking utensils, his saddles, and his medicines, and reckon upon finding nothing on the road but bare provisions, and not always a superabundance of these.

We spent the last three days of our sojourn in the Turkish capital in making such purchases as seemed necessary for the journey. Padded saddles, water bags, capotes, stuffed coverlets, and travelling boots, were among the principal articles which we required. These were all made up in bundles, and despatched on board the Austrian steamer, in which we embarked for Samsoun, on the Black Sea, which we reached without any disaster, even without sea-sickness, which seems,

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according to an unsavoury couplet of Lord Byron's, inseparably connected with the Euxine.

We passed Sinope, the dwelling-place of the cynical Diogenes, and a few hours after, were discharged with our baggage into a large boat that was hired to convey us to the shore. But as the sea was very shallow, and would not allow our bark, which was a very primitive affair, to approach near enough to the land, we were carried through the intervening water on men's shoulders, a mode of transit which I recollect was formerly practised at Calais during the good old days. I had no reason to complain of my biped, who was a stout able-bodied fellow, a hamal, or porter by trade, and therefore used to bearing burthens. Glass or crockery could not have been carried more carefully, and as I looked back and saw one of my companions struggling in the agonies of fear with his steed, a struggle which ended in their both going down with a heavy splash, I really felt no inconsiderable amount of gratitude to the broad-shouldered bearer of burthens who had acquitted himself so successfully.

Marshalled by the Vice-Consul's khawass, we proceeded to the consulate; but found that the

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house was undergoing repairs, and that of course we could not be accommodated there. A lodging was, however, procured in the street hard by, and after a good dinner at the hospitable board of Mr. Stevens, we repaired to our new quarters.

They were decidedly airy, for one of the rooms was nothing more than a raised platform of wood, with a very dilapidated roof, and sheltered at the sides by two walls of very questionable stability. A group of curious idlers who had followed us from the consulate, stood gazing on our preparations for retiring to rest. These were soon made. I laid down my padded coverlet on the floor, and having rolled up several miscellaneous articles so as to form a kind of extempore pillow; I wrapt myself in my capote, and drawing the hood comfortably over my head, was dozing quietly off, when my incipient slumbers were interrupted by a low hissing sound. I immediately thought of snakes, and flinging off my hood, started up in some alarm, but was speedily reassured on perceiving that the noise proceeded from the whispers of a group of women who had thrust their heads through a kind of trap-door, and were scrutinizing me at their leisure. The movement

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I made, startled them in their turn, and with a suppressed titter, they vanished, leaving me to undisturbed slumbers.

We rose early the next morning, and after breakfast, prepared to commence our journey. We had secured at Constantinople the services of a Tatar, who, for a certain sum, had covenanted to convey us safely to Mosul. He was an old Turk, with by no means a prepossessing countenance, which was rendered more grim by the mutilated condition of his nose, as well as by the ferocious pair of mustachios which extended on either side of it.

Mohammed Aga, for such was his appellation, had been for many years on the road, but he was now getting stiff and infirm, and could no longer discharge the more active duties of his profession. He was not entrusted therefore with the conveyance of government despatches, as these demanded the activity and energy of a younger man. But as travellers now and then required his services, he had not relinquished entirely his occupation as a Tatar. He was habited in a short jacket, richly braided, his nether man being enveloped in an enormous pair of trunk breeches,

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terminated by Turkish boots. He wore on his head a fez or red cap, with a blue silk tassel, bound round his brows by a small shawl or handkerchief arranged turban-wise. In addition to this useful protector and guide, we were provided with a magnificent parchment document from his Majesty the Sultan, answering the purpose of a continental passport, and known by the name of a Firman. This document, however, proved eventually of little use, and it was only by the active endeavours of Mohammed Aga or Kusker Oglu as he was sometimes called, that we were enabled to get on at all in many parts of the journey.

The country about Samsoun presented a most agreeable appearance. To the south of the town extends a long range of hills in an easterly direction, covered with luxuriant vegetation, and crowned on the summit by forests of the stunted oak and the graceful acacia. As we advanced, our cavalcade proceeded through leafy avenues formed by projecting branches, which mingling together overhead, proved a grateful shelter from the powerful rays of the mid-day sun. Here and there, patches of green sown with wild flowers of various colours, retained their verdure unimpaired,

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protected by the kindly shade. The silence was unbroken, save by the song of numbers of feathered choristers, who, from their unseen fastnesses in the wood, poured forth an unremitted strain of harmony; occasionally crossing our path and resting listlessly for a moment on the wing to take a passing view of the invaders of their tranquillity.

We were now in Pontus, the region to which the great St. Basil transported the monastic system from the flat plains and desert wastes of Egypt. Yet not here, in the midst of nature's secluded beauties, did he fix the abodes of silent meditation and ceaseless prayer. In the rough and savage mountain scenery which borders the dark and inhospitable Euxine, the mind, retiring from the world and its attractive loveliness, found a congenial home. Dark, frowning precipices, and the summits of rocky eminences, tutored the thoughts to higher and more sublime musings. In the majestic and yet fearful solitudes where nature appeared in her grander features, amidst the dark mountain pines and the roaring cascades of a more uncultivated region, men learned to anticipate the terrific splendours of the last great

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day, the wreck of nature, and the expiring convulsions of creation. The early monks betrayed a singular indifference to the loveliness of a world which they had renounced. The worn and wasted regions in which they generally chose to dwell, awoke, perhaps, responsive and sympathetic emotions, in hearts too deeply sensible of the barrenness and emptiness of all created things.

As we emerged from the shelter of the forests, the sky, which had hitherto preserved a placid and smiling aspect, became overcharged with dark and lowering clouds; the rain poured down in torrents, and it seemed desirable that we should seek for some shelter from its violence. We were still at some distance from the place of our destination, but the Tatar remembered that by diverging a little from the road, we might reach the village of Cazal Kiouy, where he hoped to find shelter for us.

We put our beasts to a gallop, and after riding hard for about half an hour, we reached a small collection of mud houses, but learnt to our great disappointment that the khan had been occupied early in the day by a caravan of merchants, who of course could not be dislodged. Some delay

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ensued, but at last the Tatar made room for us in one of the neighbouring houses, where he proposed we should spend the night, and then set forward in the morning.

The people to whom the dwelling belonged, were transferred without much ceremony, to an adjoining house, and we hastened with our baggage to take possession of the only decent room on the first story. We ascended by a flight of ruinous wooden stairs, abounding in yawning gaps which threatened to swallow us up at every step. By cautious climbing, however, we succeeded in reaching the top, and beheld before us our destined quarters. If we had been fastidious, the exhibition would have been a sore trial to the nerves. A fire of green wood, just lighted, was pouring forth volumes of smoke, which seemed to be making furious charges against the wind and rain, in its laudable endeavours to force itself through a very wide aperture in the roof. A shrivelled old crone, whom I rather ungallantly thought resembled strongly one of the witches in Macbeth, was labouring hard to arrange in some order a vast quantity of small apples, which covered the floor so thickly that not a vestige of it could be discerned.

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The Tatar and our servants came to her assistance, and at length succeeded, with some trouble, in piling up two ranges of apple hills against the walls, leaving a sort of valley in the centre for our accommodation. Tired, wet, and hungry, we crowded round the fire, our eyes distilling tears, which mingled with the drops of rain descending from above.

The old woman had put on a large cauldron in which was our future dinner, and, as the flame cast its gleam over her decrepit, yet strongly marked, features and long withered arms moving hither and thither, one might have deemed her an aged portrait of her countrywoman Medea, engaged in the preparation of some mystic charm. The worthy old sybil, however, was very kind and courteous, nodding benignantly to us from time to time, as if to bid us make ourselves at home. The dinner was soon ready, and, having devoured it as well as we could, it seemed advisable to retire as soon as possible to rest. A sheet, extended curtainwise across the room, separated me from my friend B—— and his wife; we bade each other good night, and having arranged my bed as well as I could in the valley before alluded

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to, I endeavoured to compose myself to slumber.

For some time I could not get settled. Avalanches of apples poured down from the hills on each side, but at last their locomotive propensities seemed at an end, and I comforted myself with the hope of a good night's rest. The lights were put out in both the compartments, and a silence ensued, which was broken at length by a groan from the other side of the curtain. I soon knew the cause. In four or five minutes I was covered with myriads of fleas, assisted by other of their allies, who poured in from all quarters. Sleep became out of the question. I groaned and writhed in vain; fresh bites followed each contortion, and my voracious tormentors seemed to be making my body one vast wound. My companions fared no better, and groan answered groan from either side of the curtain. At length, a desperate contortion of mine disturbed the equilibrium of the apples, and brought down such a shower upon me as almost to bury me beneath them.

I could bear it no longer; but, groping my way down the ruined staircase as well as I could, I

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joined the Tatar, who, with our servants, had comfortably established himself in the lower story. Too feverish to sleep, I availed myself of the remedy he recommended, namely, two cups of Turkish coffee, and, lighting my pipe, I smoked on till the break of day admonished us to mount and away. Thus ended my first night's experience of travelling in the interior.

The next morning we all mounted and rode sleepily along, still retaining about us the reminiscences of the preceding night's encounters. The road lay through part of the forest we had entered on the previous day, on emerging from which, we entered a widely extended plain bordered by low hills. The flat dulness of the level ground was succeeded by the no less wearying ascents and descents of the hill country, which had not been improved by the rains.

After a ride of nine hours we came in sight of Ladik, a pretty town situated in a kind of recess at the foot of some rather lofty hills. We were assigned quarters in the house of an Armenian baker; where we were certainly free from the inconveniences of Casal Kieuy; but our night's rest was not improved by the noise which cele-

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brated the commencement of the Ramadan. From the vast number of Seyids or descendants of the Prophet, who, with their green turbans ostentatiously displayed, perambulated the streets of Ladik, I was led to conclude that the innovations of reform had not yet reached this quiet nook of the ancient Pontus. The abundance of Seyids seems to indicate, like the multitude of friars in some Roman Catholic countries, that the established religion is flourishing in full vigour. The emblems of relationship to the Prophet of Mecca are more charily displayed where his system has already lost or is losing its sway over the public mind.

The noise and shouting which generally precedes the commencement of Ramadan in most Turkish towns, may seem a curious forerunner of a fast so rigorously observed, but during this penitential season the night is consecrated to feasting and rejoicing, while during the day the most rigid mortification prevails. Every night of this month of abasement presents the same singular contrast of boisterous mirth with mortification that the carnival does in Roman Catholic countries, with the penitential rigours of Lent. As soon as the

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shouting in the streets had died away, a tribe of howling dervishes in an adjacent mosque took upon themselves to continue the reign of noise, and they supported it manfully till near midnight, when I fell asleep in the midst of the din.

The next morning, most of the faces we met presented the wan and lugubrious appearance of men who had been making merry overnight. They scowled at us as we rode along, for to encounter a Christian at the time of a solemn fast or festival, is as unwelcome to a Turk as the flesh of the unclean beast. Even in Constantinople it is only lately that Christians deemed it prudent to venture abroad during these seasons of rampant bigotry and fanaticism.

On leaving Ladik, we continued our route over the hills for some time, till we met two men armed in a very irregular manner, who began to regale us with the tidings that a large band of robbers was abroad, in consequence of which they had been placed there by Government to escort travellers as far as the limits of the plain of Amasia. Their protection, however, was not likely to prove very efficient in case of attack, as one of their muskets wanted a lock, and the

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other, from its rusty appearance, seemed likely to do its owner more injury than any one else. Still we deemed it advisable to accept of them as a guard, not knowing whether, in case of refusal, they might not have thought fit to bring the robbers upon us. It is generally believed that the authorities in these parts have a secret understanding with the banditti, and give them intimation of the movements of travellers. In case they are not to attack the person or caravan, one or more individuals known to the robbers accompany him or it, and thus guarantee a safe passage. A similar practice exists among the Bedouins in some parts. It was not unlikely, therefore, that our guides might be themselves members of, or connected with the band of depredators from whom they were deputed to guard us. At all events, if there had not been some mutual good understanding, their number and their arms were ill qualified to afford us any solid protection.

While on this subject I may remark that most of these banditti have been driven to a course of violence and crime by the grinding tyranny of the Government. The heavy taxation and the vexatious measures resorted to for its exaction, will

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often, in a few days, make desolate a whole village, and compel its inhabitants to take refuge in the neighbouring woods and mountains.

The peasant quits the mud cottage of his fathers with his wife and children, procures either by craft or plunder some weapons, and, preserving a tacit good understanding with his fellow villagers who remain behind, he employs them as spies on the movements of travellers. For a time he pursues a hazardous and wandering life, till he has either secured enough booty to be able to make his peace with the Pacha, or has rendered himself too obnoxious to be forgiven. In the latter case, he is often hunted by the savage Albanian irregulars to his mountain lair, where he meets death resolutely with arms in his hands, or is overpowered and taken alive, to be reserved for the most exquisite and refined tortures. Writhing in agony on the stake, he not unfrequently maintains his courage unbroken to the last, and, maddened by torture and despair, invokes with his last breath the curses of heaven on the head of his oppressor. I have often, in the course of a day's ride, encountered several of these deserted villages abandoned by the whole of their

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unfortunate inhabitants, who had chosen rather to brave the perils and hardships of a robber's life than submit to the grinding tyranny of their governors.

On leaving the hilly region, we entered a widely extended plain, bearing the signs of cultivation and abundant fertility. It was watered by a river called anciently the Iris, and is bounded on all sides by mountain ranges. At the further extremity, near the foot of a chain of lofty eminences which overhang the town, stands the city of Amasia, noted in history, as having been the birth place of Mithradates and Strabo. As the traveller makes a slight circuit he passes by some low rocks, in which are cut several sepulchral chambers. A lofty eminence crowned with the ruins of an ancient castle, rises abruptly in the vicinity of the town. The city is built on the two banks of the Iris, which are connected by bridges constructed for the most part from the relics of the ancient city. Large and luxuriant plantations surround the town, irrigated by numerous water-mills, which are situated on the banks of the river. The gilded dome and minarets of the principal Mosque attract the attention on entering the city

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by the taste and splendour of their decorations; but the main body of the building differs so little from the ordinary style of Mosques that it scarcely merits particular notice.

The Governor had quartered us in a house connected with the Armenian church, in the lower part of which was a boys' school. Presently the schoolmaster himself came to pay us a visit. He said that the boys were instructed to read and write Armenian and Turkish. Their books had been supplied by the American Presbyterian Missionaries at Constantinople, whom, like many other Orientals, he confounded with the English, and supposed them to be representatives of the church of England. I found on enquiry that the Bible was nearly the only book used in Armenian schools. Most of the Eastern Christian children learn to read from it, as the Oriental churches have not the same prejudices which are entertained by the Romanists against the indiscriminate use of the scriptures by the laity.

Few boys at school learn more than the elements of reading and writing. As soon as they can read correctly, and write intelligibly, they begin to assist their parents in their trade or

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commerce. Those who have a turn for literature, study the Liturgies and legends of their church, which are generally written in ancient Armenian, a dialect bearing the same relation to the modern tongue, as the phraseology of Chaucer, to the English spoken at the present day. The easterns are not, as a people, partial to science or literature. Theology is their great forte, and to this they consider all other branches of knowledge subordinate. I am very much of their opinion.

In the evening M. Krug, a Swiss mercantile agent, and the only European in the town, called upon us. He was engaged in the collection and exportation of leeches, of which great numbers are to be found in the small streams, which branch off from the Iris, as well as in that river itself. With M. Krug came a young Armenian merchant, who was engaged in the silk trade, a branch of commerce for which Amasia is famous.

We left Amasia early in the morning, and rode for about three miles over an uncultivated and undulating tract of country. At this distance from the town stands a ruined edifice, built over a spring of water, which is said to have been produced by the touch of the body of St. John

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Chrysostom, deposited on this spot by the bearers who were conveying the corpse to Constantinople from its obscure sepulchre in Comana, a small town of Pontus.

The road from the spring to the village of Ina Bazaar was dull and monotonous, surrounded on both sides by desolate tracts of waste land covered with furze-bushes, and other wild productions of the desert. The village consisted of a few mud huts, with a small mosque, and is situated about eighteen miles to the south of Amasia.

From Ina Bazaar we proceeded to Turkal, a large village, containing about 1500 people, built on the banks of a small rivulet. In the course of the day we passed a Durbend or temporary barrack, erected for the use of the irregulars appointed by the Pasha to guard the roads. They were wretchedly clad, and as wretchedly armed. Three or four of them were grouped round the fire roasting kabob. This name is given to small pieces of meat, spitted together on a skewer and roasted. The military cooks being unprovided with proper skewers used their ramrods instead. They were kind enough to cook some for us, which

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we enjoyed exceedingly, after our uninteresting and monotonous journey.

The mention of the ramrod reminds me of one of those capricious acts of brutal cruelty by which the Turkish governors have been, and still are disgraced. A Pasha of some note had risen from the humble situation of a cook to the high station of governor of a province. His Excellency was proverbial after his elevation for his nice culinary judgment, as well as for his attachment to the pleasures of the table. One day the kabob tasted but indifferently. The Pasha called the cook, who trembling and afraid, appeared meekly before the great man.

"Son of a burnt father," cried his Excellency, in a rage, "what have you been doing to my kabob?"

The cook was all ignorance and innocence. The skewer on which the meat had been dressed was produced, and appeared to have been slightly charred by the operations of the preceding day.

"Do you make me eat cinders, O unclean?" indignantly demanded the irate epicure, and drawing from his pistol the bright and polished

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ramrod, he commanded that it should be made red hot, and thrust through the tongue of the unfortunate cook.

Happily for Turkey, instances of this kind of wanton barbarity are becoming more rare, but we still hear of acts of savage cruelty, perpetrated without shame and without punishment in the districts removed from the surveillance of Europe, and the capital.

From Turkal we had a long and tedious ride to the city of Tocat. This place is distant about sixty miles to the south of Amasia, and is situated on the banks of the Iris. It is surrounded by gardens and vineyards, and is famed for the flavour and abundance of its fruit. Indeed the Pashalic of Sivas may be considered as one of the most naturally fertile tracts of Asiatic Turkey, but the tyranny and oppression of man have done their utmost to check the bounty of nature, and to prevent that bounty from being multiplied by cultivation. Were the immense regions of untilled soil, now covered with furze and other useless and unprofitable vegetation, subjected to the labours of an enterprising, industrious, and free

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peasantry, the wild and the waste would soon lose their desolate appearance, and display the pleasing prospect of an extensive and well cultivated garden.

I may be mistaken in my judgment, but I have often thought, while wandering over the once fertile and productive regions of Asiatic Turkey, that considerable benefit might accrue from their colonization by emigrants from Europe. We send annually large bodies of our countrymen to the Antipodes, when a more salubrious climate, and a more fruitful soil might be allotted to them nearer home. In a land where labour is cheap, and the necessaries of life easily procured, a colony might at once commence their operations, with equal benefit to the inhabitants and themselves. Protected by the agents of European Sovereigns, from the capricious tyranny of the Turks, their intercourse with the natives would tend, almost necessarily, to civilize and to elevate them in the scale of humanity. The blessings of sound morality and pure religion would be appreciated and felt by the Christians of the East, and might be the means of raising from their

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present degradation, the once flourishing and widely extended Oriental Churches.

The heat is trifling when compared with India and Ceylon, where many of our countrymen have established themselves, as merchants and planters. The objections of the Turkish Government, might be easily overruled by the influence of European power, and one of the finest portions of the globe, with its unfortunate inhabitants, rescued from the barbarism, which is annually tending to produce final desolation and decay. Measures have already been taken, as far as I can understand, for the colonization of Syria, and the same arguments which prove the propriety and desirableness of such a step, will apply with equal force to the territory of which I am now writing.

At present, the natives of this land, especially the Christians, look with hope and expectation, to the west, and would gladly hail its sovereigns as their deliverers from a system as cruel as it is blindly destructive. The satraps of the Sultan, indifferent to everything but the calls of personal avarice, blight the hopes, and paralyze the en-

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deavours of individual enterprize, which often receives as a reward for its exertions, spoliation and torture, a painful prison, and a dishonored grave.

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CHAPTER VI.

Tocat. Papal Armenians. Greek Church. Nuns of St. Basil. Martyn's Grave. Sivas. Scriptural Allusion. Legend of the Two Brothers. Mountain Scenery. Ulash. Hekim Khan. Kabban Maaden. Mezraa. Entry of a Pasha. Province of Diarbekir and its Boundaries.

THE Governor of Tocat had assigned us lodgings in the Episcopal house, or convent of the Papal Armenians. We were hospitably received by two priests, who had been educated at the Propaganda College, in Rome, and spoke tolerable Italian. The bishop was absent, making one of his official visitations, but we experienced no lack of welcome on this account. We were struck by the air of neatness that distin-

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guished both the dress and the dwelling of our worthy hosts, and rendered their habitation so very different from those of the generality of Oriental Christians. It is, certainly, an undeniable fact, that those members of the Eastern Churches, who have admitted the supremacy of Rome, are much more remarkable, as a body, for cleanliness and intelligence, than their independent brethren. I attribute this, mainly, to the frequent visits paid by members of their priesthood and Episcopate, to Italy and France, as well as to the effects of the education received by various young men of their body, in the college of the Propaganda. This intercourse with Europe, limited as it is, gives the Papal Orientals a great advantage over their co-religionists, who go on flourishing in dirt and ignorance, unchecked, and undisturbed by foreign monitions or interference.

We found at Tocat, an Austrian engineer, who was establishing some copper works, the material for which was furnished by the mines of Arghana Maaden. Tocat is famed for its copper utensils, of which a large exportation takes place yearly. An agent for leeches had also taken up his resid-

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ence in this town, he was an Austrian by birth, and was connected with a company at Trieste, who had several employés in various parts of Greece, and Asia Minor.

The next day after our arrival, we repaired to visit the Greek Church, which was under the custody of some nuns, of the order of St. Basil; the priest having gone some distance into the country, to serve another congregation. As the church was not in use, we asked permission to read our Morning Prayers there, which was cheerfully granted. We each took possession of a stall in the choir, and turning our faces to the altar, B——. read, while I made the responses. A few Greeks, who had been attracted to the spot by curiosity, and the novelty, in their eyes, of an English service, remained during our prayers, and conducted themselves with great reverence and decorum. We felt ourselves once more among Christian brethren, no small consolation, when wandering in a land, where you are perpetually reminded of the predominance of Islam over Christianity. An acoulyte came forward before we began our prayers, and lighted with much ceremony, two large candles, about sixteen inches

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in circumference, and nearly ten feet in height, that were placed on two massive brass candlesticks, before the entrance to the sanctuary.

After prayers, we adjourned to the neighbouring house, where the nuns received us with great kindness. They were all advanced in years, but wore no veils, nor did they exhibit any signs of shyness or reserve. They talked fluently, and asked many questions relative to the English Church, and nation, of which they knew only that such a country existed. They did not seem to prize very highly the celibacy they professed, for they scolded me for remaining single; and asked the reason why I was not married. They gave us some fruit and Rosolio, of which, however, they did not partake themselves.

On leaving the Greek Church, we proceeded to the Armenian Cemetery, accompanied by an Armenian priest, whom we had encountered on the way. He was the individual, who had performed the last rites of Christian burial, over the remains of the devoted Missionary, Martyn, who died here, on his way back to his native land, far from his fellow countrymen, surrounded by strangers, and exposed to the brutality of his

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Tatar, who hurried him on without mercy, from stage to stage. The poor Armenians, however, did what they could; they tended his dying pillow, and they consigned his last relics to the dust, accompanied by the solemn, soothing rites of the Christian service. Their simple veneration for him outlasted the tomb, and the hands of the Christians of Tocat, weed and tend the grave of the stranger from a distant isle. The Armenian priest who accompanied us, stood for some moments with his turban off, at the head of the grave, engaged in prayer. As we turned to go away, he remarked, "he was a martyr of Jesus Christ, may his soul rest in peace." A few wild flowers were growing by the grave. I plucked one of them, and have regarded it ever since as the memorial of a martyr's resting place.

We left Tocat, at about 8 A. M., and pursued our journey over a rude and mountainous district, abounding in rocky passes and defiles. At certain distances the traveller encounters rude barracks, situated by the way side, and termed Durbends, where small bodies of irregular troops are posted, to guard the roads from the depredations of the Kurds and other plunderers. As we

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passed along, we noticed a few rude stones fixed in the earth, marking out the graves of this wild and wandering people, who like the Bedouin Arabs, rove about the country with their black tents, and spurn anything like a fixed or settled habitation.

The snow began to fall thickly around us, as we journeyed on, and the roads through which we passed were fast assuming the hue of the lofty mountain summits, which surrounded us on every side. We were now approaching the high table land in the vicinity of Sivas, and the cold became more and more piercing, notwithstanding our thick capotes and heavy boots.

We passed the night at Ghir Khan, about twenty-seven miles from Tocat, a comparatively short distance, but it occupied nearly nine hours, as we marched at caravan pace, which rarely exceeds three miles an hour. On the morning we started at half-past six, a.m., for Sivas, which we reached in about eight hours. As we drew near the town, the cold increased in rigour, and some of our first purchases were several pairs of thick woollen gloves, of which the inhabitants manufacture large quantities.

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Sivas, the ancient Sebaste, is situated at a small distance from the range of mountains known in Europe by the name of Anti Taurus. The cold and chilling blasts from their summits render its winters almost as rigorous as those of France or Germany. Snow and ice are by no means uncommon, and the nights, even in summer, present a freezing contrast to the heat of the days. Frequently, indeed, have I been reminded, while travelling in these regions, of the seeming contradictory assertion of the Patriarch, in Genesis xxxi. 40; "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night."

The modern Sebaste is not celebrated for its cleanliness, as it is one of the most filthy towns I ever passed through: nor does it possess any edifice worth noticing. Its only advantage seems to be a fine view of the neighbouring mountains, which range along to the north-east and south-west of the city. Finding, therefore, little to interest us in the place itself, we employed our leisure in arming ourselves for the passage of the Taurus, on the ensuing day, with all kinds of woollen defences against the cold.

At 8 A.M. we left Sivas, and began the gradual

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ascent of the hills we had been contemplating yesterday. As we advanced the cold grew more intense: but, being well fortified against it, I rather enjoyed its bracing effects. Perhaps nothing could be more comfortable or even luxurious than the thick and well-lined hood of the capote, which, drawn over my head, and arranged something like a friar's cowl, enabled me to bid defiance to the icy breeze. My legs were enveloped in long woollen hose, which, although comfortable in the extreme, must have made one resemble externally one of those straw-stuffed effigies of Guy Fawkes which are, or rather were, the delight of London boys on the fifth of November. A flask of cold rakee and water hangs at my saddle-bow, and the fumes of my chibouque are curling gracefully above in the frosty air. I grow indifferent to the blast as it howls by, and gird up my loins cheerfully, to encounter the rigours of the Taurus.

About seven miles from Sivas is a double passage in the mountains, which is known by the name of the Two Brothers. The two paths are divided from each other by a ledge of rock which effectually prevents the persons who choose the one from

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observing those who pass through the other. The Legend to which the appellation refers is, to the best of my recollection, as follows.

Once there dwelt at Constantinople a merchant of great wealth, who had an only brother, also engaged in commerce, at the same time, at Baghdad. And it came to pass that they made a covenant with each other that, in order to keep alive their fraternal affection, they would visit one another on alternate years at their several places of abode. This practice they continued for a long time; and the Khans of Constantinople and Baghdad were loud in their praises of the love and mutual tenderness of the two brothers. But it happened that a tyrannical Vizier occupied the chief seat on the Diwan at that time, and he hated the Constantinople merchant for his probity, and he envied him for his riches: so the result was that one day he threw him into prison, and would fain have strangled or beheaded him if he had not been prevented. The Aga of the Janissaries, however, had long been a friend, and was originally a protégé of the good merchant. He had seen with indignation the arrest of his patron, and having sundry other causes of complaint against

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the unjust Vizier, he stirred up his troops to demand the head of the unpopular minister.

While these measures were in progress, the unfortunate merchant remained in his prison, with the inevitable prospect of death before his eyes. Calling to him one of his friends, he said, mournfully, "Oh, my brother! God is great, from Him we come, and unto Him we return. This unclean fellow of a Vizier seeks my riches; and for the sake of them will not hesitate to take my head. Praise be to God I am not unwilling to die: but there is one thing which disturbs me. It is now the time for my brother's visit, and he will soon be leaving Baghdad. Do thou, therefore, hasten to him, and acquaint him with what has befallen me, that he may spare the journey, and not expose himself to the peril of falling into the hands of the Vizier."

When the merchant had said these words, his friend wept sore; and promised, by the All-Merciful that he would perform his request.

"Then," said the merchant, "go to my stables, and take from thence the fleetest of my Arab mares, and tarry neither day nor night until thou reach Baghdad, the city of peace."

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His friend answered, "There is no trust save in God the Merciful and Gracious;" and he took from the stables an Arab mare of great price, and he hasted on his way, till, on the fourteenth day, he discerned the minarets of Baghdad. Then he entered into the house of the merchant's brother, and saluted him, and he told him the tidings of which he was the bearer. The merchant's brother smote his face, and rent his clothes; and he exclaimed, "Oh, God, the Merciful One!" Moreover he remained that day absorbed in grief. But it came to pass that on the morrow, he said, "If it please God, I will arise and go to Constantinople; and it may be that I shall see my brother before Azrael summons him away."

Then he made himself ready, and set forth, the messenger also going with him. But in the meantime the Aga of the Janissaries had incited his men to rebel, they attacked the palace, with loud cries, and the Vizier was delivered unto them, and they cut off his head; while by the interest of the Aga, the merchant was appointed in his room. Then the merchant remembered the message which he had sent to his brother; and he besought the Sultan to suffer him to go to Baghdad

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to see and comfort him, for he feared that the tidings would greatly have distressed him. And the sultan said unto him, "Go." So he took ten slaves with him, and departed.

Now it happened that both the brothers arrived at the opposite entrances of the pass at the same time, but they each took a different path, and thus missed each other, so the merchant of Constantinople went on to Baghdad, and his brother to Constantinople where he was greatly overjoyed to hear what had occurred, and determined on returning to meet his brother half-way. But as he was obliged to perform part of the journey by sea, he was delayed longer than he expected, and he arrived at the pass just as his brother reached it, but this time they took the same road, and they met half-way and embraced each other, and the Baghdad merchant accompanied his brother to Constantinople, where he was loaded with wealth and honours, and died at a good old age, leaving a numerous family to perpetuate his name, and inherit his gains. Thus ends the Legend of the two brothers, which, although I cannot vouch for its authenticity, seems too romantic and interesting not to find a place in these pages.

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On leaving the pass, the road began to descend until we reached a level valley, occupying the intervening space between the high ground which we had left, and another range of lofty mountains that rose before us in majestic splendour, their towering crests covered with snow. As we passed along, we observed a salt spring, from which great quantities of that mineral were extracted during the summer season by the process of evaporation. The valley we rode through, was desolate and void of cultivation, and it was with no small gratification that I found myself once more ascending towards the mountain region. Here everything presented images of the most sublime character. The sun's rays lit up the whole, and cast into strong relief the lofty peaks of the mountain giants, each rearing his snowy crest resembling the plumed casque of some ancient Titan, and exulting in his strength. Dark ravines yawned at our side, and disclosed masses of vegetation at the bottom of their profound abysses, while here and there a rivulet fell with gentle murmurs from rock to rock, and finally precipitated itself with a loud roar into some basin, prepared by nature's hand to receive it down below.

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Our roads were filled with large fragments of rock which had from time to time been detached from the surrounding mountains, and the horses toiled slowly and painfully up the ascent. After a journey of six hours, we reached Ulash, a small collection of huts, where we found wretched accommodations.

From Ulash we pursued our route through a barren and mountainous region, now ascending and then again descending; now among the lofty peaks and table lands of the Taurus, and now crossing some valley which looked the very picture of desolation. Our progress was slow as we wished to keep with our baggage, which could not follow very rapidly up the steep and stony paths. Our night accommodations at the several villages of Delikli Tash, Kaugul, and Alajah Khan, were miserable in the extreme, and we were often obliged to share the mud room allotted to us with our baggage horses and mules. In the latter villages, we found the dwellings almost subterranean, the lower part of each abode, resting some feet below the surface of the earth, others were mere caves, hollowed in the side of a small mound or eminence. In these semi-subterranean houses the

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tops of which emerge like so many ant hills from the level of the ground, the unfortunate peasants burrowed like moles, the light glimmering through a small aperture in the roof.

The fourth day after our departure from Sivas, we reached Hekim Khan, a village composed of huts constructed on the principle which I have before alluded to. One half of the villagers were Christians of the Armenian church, and shortly after our arrival, we received a visit from their priest, who had brought a few coins to dispose of. His dress and general appearance betokened the most abject poverty, and he told us a sad tale of the oppression under which his people groaned. Time after time they had seen their little church plundered and desecrated by the infidel, their wives dishonoured, and their children carried away captive into a distant land. Yet still they continued to linger among the scenes endeared to them by the associations of childhood, and to maintain faithfully and unflinchingly the creed of their fathers.

At our request, the poor priest led the way to his little church. Its exterior was as plain and unassuming, as any of the mud cabins by which

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it was surrounded. A descent of a few steps led to a door almost below the surface of the street, under whose low portal we crept, rather than walked into the church. The interior was almost as mean as the wretched apartment we had just quitted. The walls were of mud, and a close and earthly odour seemed struggling with the sweet savour of the incense which had accompanied the celebration of the Eucharist on the previous day. Four rude pillars of pine, which age or polish had rendered quite red, supported the mud roof, while a kind of cupboard formed of deal boards constituted the altar. A pair of curtains of dirty red cotton, begrimed with smoke and dirt, served in place of the stone or wooden screen, which in all Oriental churches, divides the sanctuary from the choir. Above the altar was a painting of the Virgin and child of no mean execution, which the ruthless spoliators had left untouched. To the left was the portrait of a bishop, and to the right that of a martyr of the Armenian church. In a recess at the side, were two worm-eaten boxes, containing the tattered remains of the liturgies, and service books.

The poor Christians crowded round us with in-

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terest as we examined their little church and its contents. In their simplicity, they begged of us to represent their wretched state, and the oppressions which they suffered, to the Queen of England, and to their brethren in our own free and happy land. Poor people, they little knew that the days of the Crusaders had past, and that christian princes, from motives of state policy, had become the friends and allies of their persecutors.

The priest, like the rest of his flock, supported himself by the work of his hands. His condition, and the aspect of his simple church, brought to my mind the recollection of primitive times, when the early believers hid themselves and practised their sacred rites in the caves and dens of the earth, while their priests and even bishops laboured with their own hands, that they might not be chargeable to their poor and oppressed flocks. The worthy man was almost overpowered with joy when we poured into his rude and horny palm a sum which must have seemed almost inexhaustible to him, in exchange for a few coins which he had brought us for sale. He and others asked us for some Armenian books, but we had

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none to give. An American missionary who had passed that way a short time before our arrival, had left some books and tracts in vulgar Armenian for the use of the villagers, which had been carefully laid by in the church chest.

At 4 A.M. we left Hekim Khan. After riding for about an hour in darkness, we came to a steep and almost perpendicular mountain, resembling in shape the cone of a sugar loaf, to which is affixed the title of the camel's back, because its summit has been assimilated to the hump of that animal. The path was dangerous, or would have been to any animal but a Turkish post horse, however, we got over it safely, and soon descended into an extensive plain, called the Sultan's pasture ground. It is said that Murad encamped here when on his way to besiege Baghdad.* We still

* The Sultan Murad IV. was one of the most successful of the Princes of the Ottoman line. At an early age, he succeeded Mustapha I., his uncle, who had been deposed by the Janizaries in 1622. Having concluded a peace with the Emperor Ferdinand II., he resolved to turn his arms against Persia. He began the war by laying siege to Baghdad, which was then garrisoned by Persian troops. He was at first obliged to retire, but in 1637 he again took the field, stormed Baghdad, and disgraced his reputation by the cruel massacre of the greater part of the inhabitants. In 1639 he returned to Constantinople, and made peace with Persia, which event he did not long survive, as a fit of prolonged debauchery soon afterwards put an end to his life.

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continued gradually descending, until our road lay for some miles over a narrow plain surrounded on all sides with hills, beyond which the snow-capped summits of lofty mountains were discernible.

We passed the night in a mud hut, and arrived the next day at Kabban Maaden, where, for the first time, we saw the Euphrates, here a comparatively narrow stream flowing between two opposite ranges of rocks. We had, during the two previous days, forded several of its tributary streams, which are known by different appellations; but it was with no small interest that we found ourselves on the banks of a river so noted for its historical and scriptural associations. The width of the Euphrates at Kabban Maaden, scarcely equals that of the Thames at Twickenham; its current was rapid, and its channel was said to be much deeper here than it is nearer the sea.

Kabban Maaden is famous for its silver mines, the working of which are superintended by Europeans. About 200 Greeks are employed in the works, and those of them with whom we conversed, seemed satisfied with their employment and treatment. The silver ore is found to be largely

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mixed with lead, from which it is separated in a furnace, worked only at night, by the Greeks.

Leaving Kabban Maaden we proceeded to Peltè, about twenty miles distant from the former, a miserable collection of mud huts, inhabited by most inhospitable Moslems, who would scarcely afford us the shelter of a roof. However, our Tatar's influence was successful in procuring us a place wherein to pass the night.

The next morning, we gladly quitted our churlish hosts, and after three hours ride reached Mezraa, a town of some size, where we put up at the post house, a commodious and comfortable building, commanding a good view of the road and of the town. Seated on our carpets, we enjoyed the luxury of a bowl of Leben, (sour milk) and procured, for a trifle, some delicious grapes, as they are produced in great abundance by the vines surrounding the town. The heavy clusters which loaded our leaden tray recalled to mind the grapes of Eshcol, which the spies brought to the children of Israel as the first fruits of the promised land.

As I was quietly inhaling my chibouque in the wooden balcony outside the chief apartment, the sound of drums and trumpets disturbed my half-

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sleepy reverie; and the Tatar came to announce that the Pasha of Kharpoot, who had been newly appointed, and whose usual official residence was at Mezraa, was now entering the town. I hurried to the window commanding the best view of the cavalcade, which was as striking and as gay as eastern pomp could make it. Horse-tail standards were mingled with banners of green silk, inscribed with sentences from the Koran; Kurdish chiefs, distinguished by their gaudy turbans and wide pantaloons decorated with gold or silver embroidery, mingled with the troops of mounted officials, clad in the ungraceful uniform of Europe. Spears glittered, spurs jingled, and the band of the Pasha performed military music with some correctness and taste.

The Cadi and Mufti were there to offer the homage and recognition of law and religion to the representative of the sovereign; and those who did not know the truth, might imagine that there was some sincerity in the acclamations with which the new governor was welcomed. And yet oppression had been at work to furnish all this splendour. Every town or village through which the procession passed had been compelled to supply

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provisions and forage gratis for the Pasha and his hungry followers, who doubtless exacted fourfold more than their instructions bade them, and insulted and perhaps injured severely the poor peasants whom they stripped of their all. And, as I thought on this, and more than this, on wives and daughters torn away to languish in the harem of a tyrant, or abandoned, perhaps, to glut the brutality of his followers; as I pondered over old age, beaten and degraded, honesty plundered of its lawful gains, and numberless victims driven forth from their childhood's homes to wander, like outcasts, on the mountains, till they terminated their career by a cruel and agonizing death, I felt deep inward satisfaction, and heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty that I was not a Turkish Pasha.

We had entered near Kabban Maaden, the Pashalic of Diarbekir, which occupies the northern extremity of the ancient land of Naharaim, the Mesopotamia of the Greeks. It contains the cities of Diarbekir, and Urfah, better known in history as Amida and Edessa. Continuing its natural boundary towards the East, by the mountain chain, which descends almost in a curve from Mardin to Sinjar, we may define, with tolerable

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accuracy, the general extent of the Roman dominion to the eastward. Occasional enterprises, indeed, may have led the masters of the western world as far as the banks of the Tigris, and the regions southward of Mosul; but their actual territory can hardly have extended beyond the mountains of Singara. To the westward of these natural fortifications they possessed cities of no inconsiderable strength and size, and we read, almost with surprise, that the border town of Nisibis was able to repel, in later times, three successive assaults made by the whole force of the Persian monarchy, under one of its most warlike sovereigns. With the loss of that city, and the infringements of their natural frontier, began the decline of Roman power in the extreme east, a decline which was consummated by the conquests of the successors of Mohammed, aided, or at least unopposed, by the Christians of the Nestorian and Jacobite communities, whose affections the Greeks of the Lower Empire had persisted in alienating by a series of insults and persecutions.

After leaving Kabban Maaden we seem to have done with the Greek Church. Except at Diarbekir, where their numbers are few, the followers

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of the imperial creed, called from that circumstance Melkites or King's men, have left no traces of their rites in Mesopotamia. The Jacobites and the Nestorians, with here or there a few Armenians, who are, however, only sojourners, and not originally natives of the country, seem to divide between them the land of the two rivers. The rough and guttural tones of the Chaldee or Syrian Ritual succeed to the polished accents and winning melody of the Greek. Perhaps the same difference may have been observable in ancient days. The Hellenic bore partial sway at Amida and Nisibis: but it was not the idiom of the country. Even St. Ephraim, though educated at Edessa, was little versed in Greek. The natives of Mesopotamia maintained manfully their own languages, and resisted the fascinations of that musical dialect which had subdued by its charms other and remoter nations.

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CHAPTER VII.

Anti-Taurus. Argana Maaden. Armenian House. Black tents of Bektash Aga. Arrival of Osman Pasha. Chim-bel-bam. Diarbekir. A Disappointment. Deacons of the Syrian Church. SS. Cosmas and Damianus. Reputed Miraculous Oil. Progress of the Roman See in the East. French Policy. Syrian Church and Pictures.

We had hitherto been wandering among the wild scenery of the Taurus, but we were to make our last essay of it on leaving Mezraa. From the day that we left Sivas, mountains and rocks had been our constant companions; and our farewell to them was accompanied by circumstances which tended to awaken our regret at parting. We left Mezraa before daybreak, and were hardly clear of the town before we began ascending. The lower ranges of rocky hills were soon passed; but at the

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foot of the higher and steeper mountains, we paused for a quarter of an hour to take breath and breakfast.

Refreshed by this halt, we re-commenced our ascent; and for some time the dull and barren surface of the mountain side formed our only prospect, though it was somewhat enlivened by the faint gleams of light, which illumined the summit, and gave promise of coming day. But if our toils in ascending had been fatiguing and disappointing, the view which burst upon us as we gained the crest of the mountain was so magnificent that it amply repaid all our past inconveniences. Embedded as it were in a circle of rocks, and surrounded, on every side, by lofty peaks covered with snow, was a lake of water, about a quarter of a mile in length, whose still and placid surface seemed unagitated even by the morning breeze. The sun was just rising, behind the lofty heights that formed the back ground of the picture, throwing their pure white summits into strong relief by the effulgence with which his coming had overspread the sky beyond them. As he mounted still higher in the heavens a gentle and reflected light seemed to play upon the lake, and gradually deve-

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lope the gentle rippling of its silvery waters, as they felt the sway of the morning air. We all yielded ourselves to the influence of the scene, and for some time remained stationary, gazing at the beautiful lake, and the strange fantastic shapes of the rocks by which it was surrounded.

As we pursued our route the path became narrow and dangerous. Our horses steps were but a few inches from the brink of the precipitous gulf which opened at our side, forming, in its deep and secluded bosom, a valley covered with vegetation, through the midst of which a mountain stream was quietly gliding. We continued our journey for some hours along the sides of lofty mountains surrounded by the most glorious mountain scenery imaginable. The sides of the eminences were generally bare, as great quantities of wood are annually collected for the use of the mines at Argana Maaden, to which place we were looking somewhat anxiously forward as the termination of our day's march.

We came upon it rather more suddenly than we expected. Winding round a mountain side, we turned a species of projection, and beheld before us an extensive gorge, near the centre of

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which was the town of Argana Maaden. It seemed almost buried by the hills that surrounded it, and nothing could convey a more perfect image of seclusion from the world, than this collection of houses shut in on all sides by lofty mountains, whose towering peaks appeared to bar even the light of heaven from ingress. Our descent was slow and tiresome, owing to the winding nature of the path. With Argana Maaden in constant view we never seemed to have advanced one step nearer; and when we flattered ourselves with the hope that our conductor was about to take a direct course, we found ourselves balked by some unexpected turn which led us still further about.

But even circuitous roads must have an end, and we were at length snugly housed in the comfortable habitation of an Armenian merchant, connected with the mines. It seems strange enough for an European to write thus cooly of a process of appropriation, which however customary in the East, is not exactly accordant with English tastes. Imagine a stranger newly arrived in London, quartered on Mr. Rothschild, or Mr. Baring, usurping his best rooms, occupying his choicest beds, and sending his servants into his

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cuisine, to direct culinary matters. Yet in Turkish travel, it is a thing of everyday occurrence, and no Christian at least, however respectable for his wealth and character, can relieve himself from the liability of having his house invaded, and his domestic arrangements disturbed by the first travelling Frank, who requires a lodging and has influence enough to secure one.

We are now occupying the state apartment of the Armenian merchant's house. It is a long narrow room lined with diwans, raised about a foot from the floor, and amply furnished with soft cushions. Various silken curtains conceal from view recesses fitted up with shelves, on which are deposited mattresses stuffed with wool, sufficient in number to accommodate twenty or thirty people. Our host sends us a smoking pillaw from his own table, and treats us with a polite hospitality, which I am sure we have not deserved. I may be told that he is obliged to receive us,—granted, but his kind and courteous deportment, was not part of the bond. He might have been surly and ill-tempered, had he so chosen it.

The mines of Argana Maaden, produce annually great quantities of copper, which is sent

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on to Tocat, to undergo a refining and purifying process. The mines are under the control of a company of native merchants, who farm the revenues derived from them. A colony of Greeks have been imported here, as they are considered the best workmen in these parts. They are far superior to Armenians and Syrians, in intelligence, quickness, and ingenuity. The Armenian is a heavy animal, and the Syrian is indolent, and by no means friendly to exertion. The poor Kurds are the Gibeonites of the Argana Maaden community, and supply them with fuel, for which they get poorly paid.

We left Argana Maaden, at 6 A.M., and four miles distant from the mines, crossed a tributary stream of the Tigris, not far from its source. That river takes its rise among the mountains which we had just passed. Its sources are seven in number, which are all found between Argana Maaden and Mush, and unite themselves into one stream not far from the city of Sert, in the Eastern part of the Pashalic of Diarbekir.

The descent of the Taurus was difficult and tedious, and we arrived at Argana, wearied and spiritless. The journey of a few miles had occupied nearly four hours, and our quarters at the

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latter town were not so comfortable as at the former, but I consoled myself with a chibouque and the never failing Eastern aphorism of Allah Kerim. There is something depressing in the transition from the wild and magnificent scenery of the mountains, to the dead level of a flat and uninteresting plain, where you can see nothing before you for miles but the same unchanging prospect. The grass around us had become completely parched by the sun, whose rays descended on our heads with painful vehemence as we rode along.

Two irregulars had been despatched with us from Argana Maaden, whose equipments were as usual far from satisfactory. The firelock of one was interesting, doubtless, as a relic of antiquity, and would have formed no mean figure in a museum, but its fighting days were clearly over, and its venerable barrel was deeply encrusted with rust. The other irregular carried an ancient scimitar suspended by a piece of cord over his shoulder. The blade and point of his trusty weapon, protruded for several inches from the dilapidated scabbard, which seemed to adhere to its companion with a tenacity that rendered perfectly hopeless all ideas of separation. These

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valiant men-at-arms, resembled in their apparel that celebrated company with which Sir John Falstaff declared so stoutly, he would not march through Coventry. However, they guarded us in safety to the black tents of Bektash Aga.

We were received courteously at this Kurdish encampment, which was situated about midway between Argana and Diarbekir, on the vast plain bounded on the west by the Euphrates, and on the East by the branch of the Tigris, which we had forded on the preceding day.

A large tent was assigned us, divided by a slight screen from the habitation of several rather noisy fowls, who proved finally very troublesome neighbours, as they contrived by some means or other to open a communication with us, and we were somewhat disagreeably surprised by the entry of two or three members of the feathered family in the course of the evening, who in performing their evolutions round the tent, generally contrived to extinguish our light.

The Kurds had kindled fires on the heath before their tents, and were busily engaged in preparing the evening meal, when an interruption occurred of no very pleasant nature. Distant notes

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of warlike melody came floating on the evening breeze, and soon the outlines of a body of horsemen could be traced wending their way towards the encampment. The chief doubtless thought of his anticipated dinner, and desponded. The contents of the great cauldron, that had been latterly simmering away with such spirit in front of the great tent, must all go to the coming Aga and his hungry train. Nearer and nearer sound the horses' steps, the moon breaks forth from behind a cloud, and discovers a gallant band advancing with a portly figure at their head, whose uniform betokens that he has held, or is still holding, the rank of a Pasha. Presently the whole encampment is in an uproar. The poor dinnerless Kurds fly hither and thither to procure forage and refreshment for man and beast, the Aga himself with low and reverential demeanour, holds the stirrup, and assists the great man to dismount, and we learn after the guests have become somewhat settled in their new quarters, that the late arrival is entitled Osman Pasha, and that he comes from Baghdad, to salute the Pasha of Kharpoot, whose triumphal entry into Mezraa we had already witnessed.

On hearing that two Europeans had arrived at

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the encampment, the Pasha condescended to invite us to dinner, an invitation which only my companion accepted, as I had already eaten, and felt more disposed to sleep; he returned in about two hours, well satisfied with his entertainment, but his entrance woke me, and I was not destined again to taste the sweets of slumber. The Pasha and his attendants seemed inclined to prolong their revelry, and the sounds of uproarious mirth scared away sleep from my eyes; I lay tossing about on my mattress in vain. At length they broke out with a song, the burden of which, as far I can recollect, was "Chimbel bam, chimbel bam." It seemed very comic, for shouts of laughter hailed each refrain, "Chimbel bam, chimbel bam." I closed my ears in desperation, but the sound would creep in; even when the singer was silent, and the noise gradually died away, the echo of that strain rang in my hearing still. As I dozed off in uneasy slumbers, "Chimbel bam" seemed present with me. It appeared almost to change from a sound to a form, and to bestride me like a nightmare. I could not account for it then, I can hardly do so now, but the first words I caught myself repeating on the morrow were "Chimbel bam."

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The Kurds of Bektash Aga had formerly been robbers, and their chief had only lately sent in his adhesion to the government. Perhaps this circumstance led him to treat his visitor from Baghdad with such marked respect. He performed for him the offices of a menial, held his horse, and served him at dinner with the assiduity of an humble dependant. A few months may see a quarrel arise between the Pasha of Diarbekir and his feudatories, Bektash Aga and his tribe will once more become robbers, and woe betide Osman Pasha if he falls into their hands; they will make him bring sticks to boil their cauldron, and that fine French watch, which he displayed with so much ostentation before dinner, will soon find its way into the custody of the Jews.

Osman Pasha and his train have taken their departure, and we purpose to pursue our journey in the opposite direction. The road lies through a flat uncultivated plain, varied now and then by slight undulations. Barrenness and desolation are around us, and we ride along, each with his head enveloped in the cowl of his capote, till aroused by the announcement that Diarbekir is in sight; we lift up our eyes, and perceive a well

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fortified town, with walls built of black stone, and amply garnished with formidable towers. This is the ancient Amida, or Amid, called also Kara, or Black Amid, from the colour of its walls. It was one of the most opulent and populous of the Mesopotamian cities during the time of Constantine and his successors, though it suffered severely from the invasions of the Persians. Abulfeda characterises it as an ancient city of the province of Diarbekir, situated on the western bank of the Tigris, abounding in trees and shrubs. Another writer tells us that it is a splendid city, possessing a magnificent citadel, and great store of provisions, surrounded by walls of immense strength constructed of black stones, over which neither iron nor fire have any power.

The appearance of the place from the outside seemed to justify and support the descriptions which I have just quoted. The compactness and solidity of the walls presented a striking contrast to the mean and dilapidated fortifications of other towns that we had passed, and the state of the towers and gates seemed to lead us to expect that we should find the interior less squalid and filthy than the interiors of Eastern cities usually are; but the

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anticipations we had formed, as we contemplated the well-built walls and bulwarks, were speedily dissipated, as we entered the narrow streets, and inhaled the abominable odours which proceeded from them. Nearly half of the houses were in ruins, the thoroughfares seemed deserted, and a few wretched, half-naked outcasts, were contending with each other for the possession of a few melon rinds covered with filth, which a passer by had cast carelessly away.

They scarcely heeded us as we rode past, and we shuddered with surprise and disgust, as we marked their gaunt features, bodies attenuated by famine, and the wild looks in which the pain of physical suffering was fearfully mingled with the semi-madness of despair.

We were assigned lodgings in the house of a Syrian Catholic, and after a brief interval of rest and refreshment, we sallied forth to pay a visit to a Syrian deacon, for whom my companion had received letters from a bishop of that communion at Constantinople.

We found this gentleman seated in the court of his house in company with the ex-bishop of Kharpoot, Mar Georgios, who was then making a short

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stay at Diarbekir. The bishop was a good looking man of middle stature, clothed in the dark robes of his order, and possessing a countenance less dignified than good-natured. The deacon was a man of about forty years of age, clad in the usual costume of merchants and tradesmen. As the wakeel, or agent of the patriarch, he possessed great influence over the Jacobite Syrians of Diarbekir; the more so, perhaps, because no bishop was appointed to it, it having been considered from early times as part of the diocese of the patriarch himself.

The office of deacon in the Greek, Roman, and English churches, has commonly been considered as an ecclesiastical grade preparatory to the priesthood, and possessing the least possible amount of authority or influence; those who hold it are generally persons who have devoted themselves entirely to the ministerial office, and have totally separated themselves from every secular pursuit. But the diaconate of the Syrian Jacobites has assumed a widely different character, inasmuch as its members are usually engaged in traffic, and possess a greater amount of wealth and influence than the priests or bishops, their ecclesiastical

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superiors. The number of deacons attached to each church is very considerable, sometimes exceeding thirty, and it is difficult to meet a respectable or well educated Syrian who has not been advanced to this primary grade among the church's officers. Few comparatively enter the priestly office, as their canons require, like our own, a total renunciation of worldly pursuits. From the peculiar character of the Syrian diaconate, it generally follows that its members are among the most able and respectable of their community. Their connexion with the church induces them to study its theology and its history, while their commerce obliges them to mix with the world, to travel, and to observe, and thus generates habits of greater activity, and opinions of more practical utility than those possessed by their bishops and priests, who are drawn chiefly from the seclusion and inexperience of the cloister to discharge their serious and important duties.

Theology is the grand theme of Oriental discourse, and both the bishop and the deacon were anxious to understand the nature, rites, and doctrines of the English church. Like most of the Oriental Christians, they seemed scarcely to be

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aware of our belief in the Gospel, and were disposed to confound us with the American Presbyterians, whose missionary had lately passed through the town. Of the doctrines of the latter they had gathered a confused notion, from the tracts which had at various times been distributed, translated into Arabic and other languages; but they seemed to view the dogmas of Calvinism with no great favour.

At their request, we consented to take luncheon with them on the morrow, to meet some of the most wealthy and influential laymen of the Syrian community; we then strolled through the town, which we found did not improve upon acquaintance, and directed our footsteps to the Greek church.

It was a small but not inelegant structure, circular in form, and surmounted by a dome. The screen was furnished with the usual quota of gaudy and ill-executed paintings, and the church was dirty and badly ventilated. We found here the sepulchres of SS. Cosmas and Damianus, whose names are well known to the ecclesiastical antiquary, from their frequent recurrence in the earlier liturgies, and particularly in the canon of the Roman mass.

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They were, says the legend, two Christian brothers, who lived in the reign of the Emperor Diocletian. Educated in the strictest principles of piety by their devout mother, Theodora, they were remarkable even at an early age for their numerous acts of charity and benevolence. Taking a literal view of the precepts of Christ, they disposed of all their property and distributed the produce among the poor. That they might be more useful, they studied medicine, that they might minister to the afflictions of the sick and suffering. By persevering diligence they acquired an almost superhuman knowledge of the art of healing, which they used only for the benefit of their fellow creatures, utterly refusing all recompence for their skill. Their virtues attracted many to Christianity, and marked them as a prey to its enemies. During the persecution which Diocletian and Maximian excited against the church, the two brethren were apprehended and dragged before the proconsul, who offered to their choice the dreadful alternative of death or apostacy; as may well be imagined they cheerfully chose the former, and sentence having been pronounced, they were beheaded in the presence of a vast mul-

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titude, confirming by the constancy with which they suffered, the truth of that faith which the charity and devotion of their lives had so nobly illustrated.

A marble slab covers the bodies of the saints, bearing on its surface a plain cross in bas relief. There was a kind of aperture near the edge of the tomb, through which it is said a miraculous oil oozes forth on the festival of the saints. This oil, which is supposed to issue from the bodies within, is highly esteemed as a remedy for all kinds of sickness; it is collected in bottles, and disposed of to the Greeks of the province, who have full faith in its virtue.

The priest told us that his congregation was now reduced to ten or twelve, as the great majority had joined the Greek Catholics, or members of the Greek church in communion with Rome; the seceders were gaining ground every day, and had a bishop just appointed over them.

The progress which the Church of Rome is making, in winning over the members of the Oriental Churches, to acknowledge her supremacy, and to submit to her jurisdiction, will affect different minds in various ways. By the devout

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adherent of the See of Rome, it will be regarded as the triumph of truth over error and heresy, while those who deem the pretensions of that See alike opposed to reason and scripture, will feel sorrow that the long maintained independence of the Orientals is slowly, but surely yielding to usurpation. Yet, whatever effect it may produce on his mind, no candid observer of the course of events, can, for an instant, deny that the Roman interest is gaining rapidly in these parts, and that ere long, as far as human foresight can foretell the future, the Pontiff of the seven-hilled city, will add the patriarchs and bishops of the east, to the long list of his tributaries.

But there are circumstances mixed up with these triumphs of Romanism, which may excite the attention of the statesman, as well as the consideration of the divine. The See of Rome is not single handed in the conflict, she is aided and sustained by the political power of France. Every French official is more or less, as far as a layman can be, a Missionary of the Roman See. The missions are everywhere considered as enjoying French protection. Do they embroil themselves with the government? The French Consul

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steps forward as their champion. Are they engaged in litigation with a rival sect? French influence is thrown into the scale. Nor is this line of conduct, on the part of France, a novelty or accident, it dates from the days of Louis XIV, and has been pursued with steadiness and consistency, by Monarchical, Imperial, Consular, and Republican Governments. France directs the Christians of the east, through the medium of the Roman Missionaries, and in the case of the downfall of the Turkish empire, she will find warm and energetic partizans in those Christians of the east, who have yielded obedience to the supremacy of Rome.

Her only rival in the affections of the Orientals is Russia, and Russia meddles only with the Greeks. But the Greek Clergy are ignorant, and without influence, while the Propaganda is continually training, and sending forth young Orientals, prepared by the advantages of an European education to take the lead among their countrymen. By these means the adherents of the Papacy maintain a visible superiority over the other Christians. The former are better dressed, they have more intelligence, their churches and

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their houses are cleaner, and more elegant. They are better protected from the violence and caprice of the government, for they have always the French Consul to resort to. The sovereignty of Rome in the East, seems indeed inevitable.

On the following day, according to promise, we repaired to the house of the Syrian Deacon, Daood, where we found the bishop and the leading men of the body assembled. Glasses of liqueur were handed round before luncheon, and each guest drank five or six, to sharpen the appetite. The cloth was laid on the floor, and upon it was placed a small round table of ebony, inlaid with ivory. We all surrounded it, and covered our knees with the white cloth. The posture was most unpleasant to those, who had not been accustomed to sit cross legged; but our Syrian friends were, of course, quite at their ease. The lunch was a substantial one, and comprised ragouts of various kinds, soup, pillaw, and leben. The repast wound up with a supply of delicious fruit. I must not omit to mention that the bishop pronounced a long grace in Syriac, which was devoutly listened to, every one giving a hearty Amen, and crossing themselves at the conclusion.

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After we had finished our repast, we went to look at the church. It was a large building, very dirty, and abounding in tawdry decorations. On each side of the great altar were two smaller ones, on one of which the elements are placed before consecration. The other marks the place where the priest is to robe himself for the service. There were no seats, but the floor was covered with matting as in a mosque, on which the congregation sat cross legged, when not standing or kneeling. The altar of the Syrians is a square table, either of wood or stone, generally the latter, raised upon three steps. It is surmounted by a cross, on each side of which is a candlestick, holding a short wax candle, which is lighted only when the liturgy is recited. The vestments of the priests resemble somewhat those of the Greek Church. The Syrian clergy may marry while in deacons orders, but not afterwards.

We found several pictures in the church, but they did not seem to attract any veneration, and as far as execution is concerned, were certainly not deserving of it. One of these daubs represented the day of judgment, and a more perfect burlesque of an awful and serious subject could

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hardly be imagined. A very truculent looking angel was busily engaged, with a pair of balances, in weighing souls. A large pit at the corner emitted flames and smoke, and received into its yawning jaws a number of men and women, who were writhing under the agonies inflicted by a number of three pronged tridents, wielded by black figures with horns, hoofs, and tails, one of whom was bearing a man in triumph, on the top of his fork. In another compartment of the picture, the artist had pourtrayed seven infants, in a gloomy and dismal kind of place, which seemed to be a species of cavern, and was expounded to us as a representation of the state of unbaptized children. Various portraits of saints embellished the walls, all looking very grim, and void of expression, so that upon the whole, we could not compliment the Apelles of Diarbekir, on his proficiency in art.

We took a friendly leave of our Syrian friends, and returned home to prepare for the next day's journey. The governor was kind enough to order the gates of the town to be opened at an early hour, and it was nearly dark when we took our farewell look at Amida the black.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Kurdish Village and People. Turkish Oppression. The Skull. Syrian Bishop. The Monastery of Zaphran. Library and Manuscripts. Armenian Banker. Nisibin and its Traditions. Tomb of St. James. Jezirah.

SHORTLY after we had left the gates of Diarbekir, we forded the Tigris in two places, and pursued our route over stony hills, covered, here and there, with patches of vegetation. Turkish now ceases to be the vernacular of the towns and villages, but gives way to Arabic and Kurdish. The latter, however, seems to predominate in the villages, as they are chiefly inhabited by settlers from the neighbouring mountains. We arrived at one of these Kurdish villages about mid-day, but found very sorry accommodation, as it had just been visited, and of course plundered by the Albanians

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of the Pasha. Most of the inhabitants had taken to flight, and the others intended to follow their example, for they frankly avowed that it was impossible to sustain any longer the grinding tyranny of the Turkish officials.

The Kurdish character is one that has been plentifully laden with execration, and it must be avowed that their savage ferocity in war can admit neither of excuse nor palliation. Yet I have seldom experienced more cordial welcome, or more genuine hospitality, than I have received at the hands of these half civilized mountaineers. As a nation, they possess a bold independence of character, and an entire freedom from the low servility and its attendant vices which disgrace and degrade the greater portion of the vassals of Turkish oppression. Divided into clans or tribes, they submit cheerfully to the Patriarchal authority of the chieftain, an authority which seldom exceeds the limits of a just and paternal rule; individual liberty is unfettered by the numerous restrictions with which under the Turkish regimen, the cruelty or caprice of numberless petty tyrants, have restrained the enterprise, and blasted the industry of their unfortunate Rayahs. Yet the mountains which nurse the rude independence of

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the mountaineer, are barren and incapable of affording him to any extent the means of supporting his freedom.

The desire of providing for his own wants, and for those of his family drives him down to the more fertile and fruitful plains, whose rich soil and luxuriant harvests are marred by the tyranny of those who rule over them. The unhappy wanderer finds to his cost that the mild and genial temperature which forms so pleasing and so marked a contrast to the cold chilling blasts of his native mountains is an atmosphere of slavery, whose zephyrs fan not the limbs, and refresh not the toils of the free. Hardly have the unfortunate Kurd and his companions completed the rude huts of their village colony, and sown their little crop, when the stern exactions of a relentless Pasha apprise them that they must not expect to labour for themselves. The harvest is plenteous, perhaps, but three parts of it at least, find their way into the garners of a governor, whose grasping avarice is too intent upon present gain to perceive that, by oppression, it is destroying the source of future profit. The inhabitants of the village murmur and pay, but after several repetitions of the same conduct, they begin to grow weary

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of a system which holds out no hope or encouragement to honest industry. They become idle and disinclined to labour, and sigh in the midst of oppression for the former independence of their mountain home. The Pasha's exactions increase as the means to satisfy them fail, and the wretched cultivators find at last that they have no alternative between a sudden flight, and torture or insult from the Albanian myrmidons of the Pasha.

Sometimes when the villagers are numerous and possess arms, they resolutely set the tyrant at defiance, and break out into open rebellion against his authority. Troops are sent against them, and if successful, they rarely leave many survivors in the rebellious district. Men, women, and children are put to the sword indiscriminately, and their ears, strung together on small cords, are suspended at the principal gate of the chief city of the province, as a warning to those who may feel disposed hereafter to question the Pasha's right of exaction, or to refuse submission to his legalized robbery. Should the villagers however be fortunate enough to escape, before the ministers of vengeance can arrest their flight, they usually betake themselves either to the mountains or to some deserted part of the province, where they

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subsist chiefly by plunder. Yet even in this case, they are liable continually to be pursued and hunted down by the Albanians, and they learn by sad and fatal experience, that from Turkish tyranny there is no sure and certain refuge but the grave.

The political quidnuncs of London and Paris may extol the advancing liberality of the Turkish government, its Hatti Sherifs, and very lately manifested humane anxiety for the lives and liberties of its subjects, but these fair-seeming professions are confined, as far as regards their actual fruits, to the immediate vicinity of the capital. The peasant of the interior is still pillaged, insulted, and oppressed by governors, who regard a province solely as a source of individual profit, and endeavour to lay up a sufficient store against the day of dismissal or disgrace. The Porte still disposes of its employments, and encourages the peculations of its agents, by the ruinous and unjust demands which it makes upon them. The laws of the empire may be in themselves reasonable and just, but what is law when the Executive has the power of superseding it by an act of arbitrary will? In every Turkish province the Pasha is the law.

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About three hours journey from Mardin, we passed the boundary of the province of Diarbekir, and entered that of Mosul. Our road lay through an uneven plain, at the termination of which rose abruptly the eminence on whose southern brow the town of Mardin is situated. For some miles before we arrived at the foot of the mountain, we could discern the distant outline of the citadel, which crowned the highest visible summit. A chain of rocky hills wound off to the eastward, and curving round in a southerly direction, bore down towards the desert of Sinjar.

The city of Mardin is built on the sloping brow of a mountain, which is commonly considered as claiming some alliance with mount Masius, though the connexion between them does not appear to be distinctly defined. As the traveller crosses the summit of the eminence, and begins to descend into the town, a prospect of boundless extent opens before him. To the south and west he beholds a vast expanse of plains terminated only by the horizon, and formed into a species of Delta by the rivers Euphrates and Khabur. Here Mesopotamia may be said truly to commence, and its general features as described by Xenophon appear even at this day strikingly correct.

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The eye of the traveller seeks in vain for the green forests and agreeable shades of Northern Asia, such as he passed during the former part of his journey by the banks of the limpid Iris. In their stead, dwarf-bushes and the scanty foliage of the olive and palm will occasionally relieve inadequately the general monotony of Mesopotamian scenery. The dull, tame level of the plain eschews the bold and sublime grandeurs of Pontus and Cappadocia; and the wayfarer feels, as he gazes over the widely-extending flats, that he will speedily bid adieu for some time to mountains. Yet the hand of Nature, which has denied the more splendid and striking features of creation, has liberally bestowed what, perhaps, is more conducive to the happiness and comfort of existence. The fertility and richness of the Mesopotamian plains have, from early ages, been celebrated in history, and even at the present day the blessings of an ever-teeming soil seem to compensate for the violence and spoliation which is the lot of the husbandman. Yet thousands of acres remain untended and uncultivated. The population decreases annually, and the time may speedily be anticipated when the miseries of Turkish rule will have reduced the once plentiful and fruitful

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land of the two rivers into a barren and desolate wilderness, as frightful and terrific in its desolation as that which surrounds the last relics of proud and haughty Babylon.

The citadel of Mardin is celebrated by Abulfeda as one of the strongest fortresses in Mesopotamia. He mentions a singular race of serpents to be found near the summit of the mountain, who exceeded all others in ferocity and venom. It was not, however, my ill-fortune to meet with any of them.

The town itself seemed to have a tolerable share of ruined habitations. As we ascended the narrow streets that led to our appointed quarters, my horse stumbled over some round substance, which lay near a heap of rubbish on the ground. One of the servants touched it with his stick. It was a human skull, and, with several others that we perceived in different corners of the street, had served as a football for the idle boys. These sad mementos of persecuted humanity had been brought in some days before by the Governor's troops, who had been lately making a foray against some neighbouring villages.

We were rescued from our uncomfortable quarters at the post-house, where we had been assigned

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lodgings, by the hospitable invitation sent us by Khowajeh Murad, the Armenian banker of the Pasha. This gentleman was polite enough to despatch horses to convey us through the town to his residence, which was situated in one of the highest parts of the city, and commanded a fine view of the plains below.

We had scarcely changed our travelling dresses and performed our ablutions ,when a visitor was announced in the person of Bishop Matthew, a Syrian Jacobite prelate, from the neighbouring convent of Zaphran. The reason of his visit was soon explained. B——had sent on in the morning some letters from a Syrian Bishop with whom we had been very intimate at Constantinople. Just as we were alighting, we received, by way of reply, an invitation to the Convent, worded, however, in such a cold and apparently unfriendly manner, that we judged it best not to accept it. Bishop Matthew had come, therefore, to explain and account for the seeming reserve of his community. The Patriarch, he said, was absent, and some members of their body looked upon the English with dislike and suspicion. He hoped, however, that we would not leave Mardin without visiting the monastery. He had himself just re-

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turned from a tour among the Syrian villages near the Euphrates, and had seen in one of them an illuminated MS. of the entire scriptures in Syriac, of great antiquity, and much reverenced by the people. It had been thrown into the Euphrates by the Turks, and had been rescued with great difficulty. The Bishop was anxious to purchase it for the Patriarch's library, but the villagers refused to part with it at any price.

The Bishop then entered at some length into a description of the present condition of his people. Some of them, he said, who had travelled and conversed with the American missionaries, were desirous of promoting a reformation in the usages and doctrines of the Syrian community; these were opposed by those who formed the majority of the body, and whose views were of a strictly conservative character. A third party was considered as favouring the pretensions of Rome, though as yet no actual separation had taken place between them and their brethren. Bishop Matthew was himself disposed to forward the tendencies of the reforming party, though he described their views as undefined, and verging in some individuals towards ultra-liberalism. Of the second class he spoke with much contempt, as of

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men who had neither reason nor scripture on their side, but were actuated solely by a blind reverence for the practices of their fathers, and a superstitious fear of change. He gave the Papal Syrians credit for activity, energy, and zeal, though it was easy to see that he viewed their success with regret, and even positive enmity. Having obtained from us a promise that we would visit the monastery on the following day, he took his leave.

The next morning we set forth from Mardin to pay the promised visit. We descended the mountain on which the city is built, and then began to ascend the side of another eminence, after which we came to a valley surrounded on almost every part with rocks. Leaving this secluded spot, which would have served admirably for a hermitage, we passed a mountain stream, and soon after arrived at the foot of an isolated rocky hill, on the summit of which was the monastery, resembling strongly in its external appearance rather the fort or stronghold of a band of robbers than the abode of pious meditation and peace. The vicinity of the Kurds, however, rendered it desirable that due precautions should be taken, as these wild people, though ignorant in the extreme,

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are bigoted fanatics, and apt to esteem the sacking of a monastery and the murder of Christian ecclesiastics as actions of supererogatory virtue.

The interior of the monastery seemed to promise well in the event of a siege, and the ramparts were certainly stout enough to bid defiance to the rude and ill-managed artillery of the Kurds. The various offices of the establishment, the chapel, and the habitations of the monks, were grouped in a straggling way around a court of extensive dimensions. In the chapel, which was dedicated to St. Eugenius, we saw a kind of case or tabernacle, bearing some verses engraved upon it from the gospel of St. Matthew in the Estranglo character, which was said to have been consecrated by St. Peter at Antioch, and from him was transmitted to the Patriarchs of that city. Near the altar we noticed the fans or screens of silver, which are used by most of the Oriental churches during the celebration of the Eucharist; they are consigned to the deacon, who waves them to and fro over the altar to drive away the flies and other insects, which in these warm climates are likely to be attracted to the sacred elements.

From the chapel we proceeded to visit the library of the monastery, which seemed to meet with little

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attention from the inmates. After descending some stone stairs, a rusty bunch of keys was produced, and with a little difficulty the door was opened, and the venerable tomes appeared, some piled up in a corner, and others scattered in careless confusion about the floor. They were all manuscripts, but our monkish friends could not or would not give us much information respecting them. They said that the chronicles and some other of the works of Bar Hebræus were among their collection, and likewise several volumes of a species of Diary, in which it is customary for each Patriarch to record the principal events of his Patriarchate.

We now ascended to the reception room of the monastery, a long narrow apartment fitted up with Diwans, and having a species of platform at the upper end, on which the Patriarch and dignitaries of the monastery usually sat. The tables were brought up, and, after the customary preface of several glasses of rakee, we were regaled with a substantial lunch, after which, pipes and coffee having been duly discussed, we mounted our horses and returned to the house of our kind host Murad.

Some of the principal Christians of the town

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had assembled at the board of our hospitable friend. We found, when we descended into the drawing-room, that he had procured for us a long table, furnished in the European fashion, and his guests, in compliment doubtless to the Frank strangers, omitted their usual custom of eating with their fingers. Knives and forks were laid for each, and though our companions' mode of handling utensils so new to them might have provoked a smile, yet they succeeded perhaps much better than a party of Europeans would have done, had they been deprived of the long-accustomed implements of feeding, and required to confine themselves to their fingers.

The conversation at table was strictly local. The doings of the Governor, the last expedition of the Albanians, the state of the roads, and the changes in the ecclesiastical departments of their several churches were the topics that engaged principally the attention of the guests. To the recital of the wonders of Europe they listened with surprise and suspicion. Railroads and balloons, though prosaic and matter of fact to us, were to them as romantic and poetical as the tales of the Thousand and One are in our eyes. They bestowed upon our relations an equal share of

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attention and credence to that usually accorded by the audience of a Turkish coffee house to the story of the wonderful lamp.

On the morrow we took our departure from Mardin, and bade adieu, with some regret, to our worthy friend and entertainer Khowajeh Murad. As we rode down the steep descent which leads from the town into the plain, I could not help meditating on the precarious character of our late host's position. The banker of a Turkish governor is an individual who realises in his every-day life what the old classic story relates of Damocles. For a time he revels in luxury and pleasure. A splendid mansion, a magnificent stud are his. As long as the Pasha's coffers are full, all is well. But every consideration of meum and tuum must disappear when His Excellency wants money. The unfortunate banker finds some morning, to his great dismay that the debtor and creditor sides of the account book have, as it were by magic, changed places; and that instead of receiving a large sum from his Highness he is expected to pay it. If he is wise, he will bend his head to the storm, and acquiesce in his loss with an expression of thankfulness that it was not greater: but if his confidence in the justice of his cause, and unwilling-

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ness to submit to imposition get the better of his discretion, he will probably soon exchange his luxurious mansion for a cold and damp prison, from whence, after suffering all the agony and torture that a tyrant's baffled cupidity can inflict, he will depart a ruined and impoverished man, if death do not kindly forestall his deliverance, and liberate him at an earlier period from his torments.

Our route from Mardin to Nisibin lay over a flat, uncultivated plain, keeping to our left the range of rocky hills, known anciently by the name of Mount Masius, near the foot of which was formerly situated the ancient city of Nisibis. On arriving at its modern representative we found a miserable collection of mud huts grouped together on the banks of the river Jakh Jakah, the ancient Mygdonius. The present inhabitants of Nisibis number about 300 families. Some ragged tents were pitched near the huts tenanted by wandering Arabs.

Less than a quarter of a mile from the village, stands a monument of ancient times, which we examined with great interest. Its architecture is Grecian, but of the depraved style of the Lower Empire. It consists of two apartments, which

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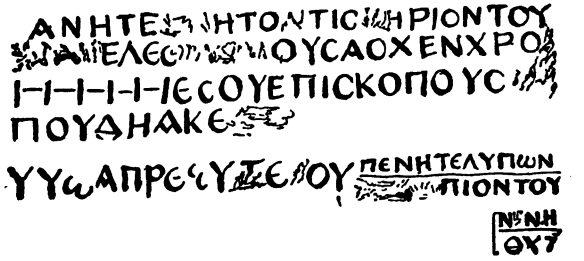
are nearly filled with rubbish and ruins, so that we could hardly work our way to a stair-case leading to the subterranean cell, in which, entombed in a marble sarcophagus, repose, it is said, the ashes of St. James of Nisibis. Near one of the entrances into the building, we found the following inscription, much defaced:



The Mohammedans hold this building in great veneration, as they do the tombs of all Christian Saints who lived before the birth of Mohammed, but the cause of their reverence for this particular building was somewhat singular. One of the late Pashas of the Province erected some large barracks near Nisibis, and determined to transform the ruined mausoleum of St. James into a Magazine for straw. The plans had been drawn up, and the architect was prepared to commence his

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work on the following day, when, early in the morning, he was summoned hastily to the presence of the Pasha, who charged him, on the strictest penalties, to forbear from touching the building. The astonished builder asked the reason of this change in his Excellency's intentions, and was informed that during the night he had been visited by revelations of a most awful nature, in the course of which he was strictly forbidden to meddle with the mausoleum. Shortly after, he made an offer to the Syrian Patriarch at Mardin to rebuild the church, and make it fit for divine service at his own expense, if the Patriarch would send a colony of Syrians and a Priest to Nisibin: while, however the negociation was pending, the Pasha was deposed, and the whole project fell to the ground.

A former governor, it is said, presumed to stable a favourite mare in one of the apartments of the building, and the next morning she was found dead without any assignable cause. These accounts were given us, it must be observed, by Mohammedans, who knew nothing of St. James beyond his name, and they were amply corroborated by the Christians.

What renders, perhaps, these legends the more remarkable, is the fact that they refer to one who,

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during his lifetime, was connected with some most singular and well-authenticated circumstances which occurred during the siege of Nisibis by the Persians.* The account of them is as follows:

In A.D. 350, Sapor, King of Persia, one of the most warlike and successful monarchs of his day, determined to invade the territories of the Romans, and, if possible, to surprise the strong city of Nisibis, one of the most formidable garrisons on the Roman frontier. He laid siege to it with a large army, and the men of Nisibis gave themselves up for lost, for the Emperor Constantius was then at Antioch, and many a long and weary march was necessary, before he could succour them, or even hear of their danger. At that time St. James was Bishop of Nisibis, and he exhorted the citizens to defend themselves valiantly, promising them at the same time the aid of his prayers. And night and day, as long

* My relation is taken from the statements of Theodoret, lib. ii. cap. 30. Philostorgius, an Arian historian, lib. iii. sec. 23, alludes to the siege of Nisibis and repulse of Sapor in the following terms:—"Sapor, King of the Persians, marched an army against Nisibis, and having in form besieged it, was in a strange and unexpected manner obliged to retreat shamefully. For James, the Bishop of the city, having instructed the inhabitants in what was necessary to be done, by his trust in God defended the town in a wonderful manner."

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as the beleaguering host lay around the walls of Nisibis, might St. James have been seen in the great church, interceding for the city and its inhabitants.

The Persians made many attacks, which were bravely repulsed; but at last, they succeeded in effecting a breach by the curious expedient of collecting, by means of dams, a great body of water together, and then letting it loose against the town. A vast torrent was thus precipitated with impetuous fury against the walls, and laid a considerable portion of them level with the ground. The Persians determined to march in the next day, and passed the night in feasting and revelry. But in the morning, as they were about to occupy the breach, a strange and novel sight arrested their attention. A new wall had been hastily thrown up by the inhabitants during the night, and on this, stood a person of tall stature, clad in robes of purple, and bearing a coronet on his head. He was surrounded by attendants, and seemed to be giving directions. But so stern and fearful was his glance, as he gazed in wrath at the Persian host, that the boldest soldier trembled as he looked upon him.

Then Sapor declared, "Verily it is the Emperor

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of the Romans that hath brought succour to the town." But his courtiers whispered together, and they said at last, "O, king, the Emperor Constantius is indeed at Antioch, and the person whom thou seest is one more than mortal." Then Sapor hurled his javelin in anger against the walls, and retired in moody silence to his tent. And, as the Persian host withdrew themselves from their posts, the Bishop St. James gazed down after them from the ramparts, and he pronounced the curse of the Lord upon them. A short interval elapsed, when an immense swarm of flies appeared in the west. They passed over the city, but attacked with fury the Persian camp, stinging men, elephants, and horses, and scattering confusion and dismay wherever they alighted. Terrified at what had happened, the Persian king commanded the tents to be struck, and with great haste recrossed the Tigris.

The name Nisibin, corrupted by Greek writers into Nisibis, is supposed to be the same as the Chaldean נציבין, which signifies military stations or garrisons. Arabian geographers consider it as the capital of the province of Diar Rabyah, and entitle the river on whose bank it stands the Hirmas, or Hirmasius. The Macedonians, however, called the latter stream

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Mygdonius, and changed the name of Nisibin to Antiochia Mygdonia. In the time of Abulfeda it seems to have been a town of some magnitude. He depicts it as surrounded with gardens, in which only white roses could be grown, and as producing a species of scorpion whose sting was followed by instantaneous death.

To the south of Nisibis extend the desert regions known by the name of Sinjar, the Singara of the Romans. The range called Mount Masius has probably some connexion with the hills of Sinjar, which are inhabited chiefly by Yezidees. The traveller to Mosul has here the choice of two routes. That by Jezirah is the longest, but supplies more plentiful accommodations and provisions, while the road by the desert occupies less time, but presents no convenient halting-place, and is infested with banditti. We therefore judged it advisable, as we had laid in no supplies, to journey by way of Jezirah.

Accordingly, we skirted the northern extremity of the desert of Sinjar, travelling through a rocky and barren country, having to the south the mountains called Jebel Tor, which are chiefly inhabited by Syrian Jacobites. We passed several villages, but encountered nothing of interest till

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the next day, when we came in sight of Jebel Judi, which rises abruptly from the eastern bank of the Tigris, and almost overlooks the town of Jezirah.

We arrived at the latter place in the afternoon, two days after leaving Nisibis, and were not a little disappointed to find that there were scarcely twenty tenantable habitations in the whole town. With much trouble, the Tatar succeeded in gaining us lodgings in the house of two Kurdish females, who screamed and cursed the infidels most fluently, when they were informed that we were to be billetted on them. To add to my troubles, B——, who had been ailing ever since we left Nisibis, fairly gave in at Jezirah, and the only room that could be got for him, was a kind of dilapidated shed exposed on all sides to the chilling breezes, which, as the winter season was coming on, blew harsh and biting from the neighbouring mountains. Fortunately, however, we possessed a medicine chest, and a female professor of the healing art in the town, by religion a Chaldean Christian, having heard that a sick Englishman had arrived, came and tendered her services.

The good lady had, it seems, a considerable and lucrative practice among both Mahommedans and

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Christians, and was considered very skilful in her mode of treatment. She looked at B—— with great attention, felt his pulse, inspected his tongue, and went through the usual evolutions of her profession, after which she recommended bleeding; B—— followed her advice, and the next day was much better.

Leaving him asleep, I rambled out on the banks of the Tigris, which here flows with its wonted rapidity. On the opposite side, were the tall and commanding heights of Jebel Judi, along which the gallant ten thousand had fought their way in days of yore. To the westward of the river, a barren and rocky plain extended itself as far as the eye could see. The water of the river seemed muddy and disturbed, being in colour a kind of dirty red. I drank some of it, but did not detect any evidence of its superior qualities, so much vaunted by the dwellers in these regions. I learnt afterwards, at Mosul, that it should be kept standing for some time in pitchers before it was used, in order to allow the sediment to sink to the bottom.

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CHAPTER IX.

Kurdistan. Derivation of the word Kurd. Resting-place of the Ark. Mosul. Houses. Climate. Ana Gholamuk. Chaldean Servant. The Yezidee. Bagh Sheikha. Yezidee Host. Syrian Priest. An Oriental's Account of England and the English.

The region to which the name of Kurdistan has been generally assigned, comprises the narrow tract of mountainous country which separates Persia from Turkey. The long ranges of rocky eminences are divided from each other by fertile valleys, where the numerous flocks find pasture during the warm and temperate seasons of the year. Yet the general character of the inhospitable soil has forced the hardy inhabitants of these mountains to migrate to the plains, sometimes as peaceful cultivators, but not unfrequently as armed marauders, like the ancient Highlanders of Scot-

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land. Their hardy valour, no less than their savage ferocity, has made the name of Kurd terrible throughout the East, and the rugged mountains of ancient Assyria may boast of having sent forth one of the greatest of Eastern conquerors, the celebrated Salaheddin, better known, perhaps, under his Latinized appellation of Saladdin.

The Arabian Philologists tell us that the Kurds are of Persian origin, and were expelled from Iran during the reign of the tyrannical Zohauk. They assert that the exiles derive their name of Kurd, from the root كرد, he drove forth or persecuted, from which the Greek Geographers and Historians formed their Carduchia and Carduchi. It is probable, that the national name of Kord or Gord, is very ancient, as we find traces of it, not only in the appellation given by Xenophon to the inhabitants of the mountains, but also in the title assigned by early writers to the mountains themselves. Berosus speaks of them as ὀρη, των κορδυαιων—which the Latin authors render Montes Gordyæorum,* a name bearing a strong affinity to the word كرد, Kord or Gord, as the sounds K and G, are frequently interchanged in Semetic languages.

* Apud Joseph. Ant. lib. i. cap. 4.

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My object in dwelling thus upon an Etymology, which to some may seem to involve inferences of but little consequence, will appear, when I come to analyze the ancient opinion, that the ark of Noah rested, after the Deluge, upon the mountains of Armenia. For several reasons, I consider the common notion that the Ararat of modern Armenia, is the place indicated by Scripture, as founded on error, and as incompatible with the narrative of what followed the deliverance of the second founder of the human race.

One glance at the map of Asia will show the extreme improbability, that the descendants of Noah should have journeyed in the direction of Babylon, over the rude and rugged mountains which intervene between Ararat and the Assyrian plains. Their route would rather have been towards the fertile country of Persia; and Iran, and not Shinar, would have been recorded as the first colony of the human race.

Nor is the opinion which assigns the Ararat of Armenia, as the resting place of the ark, at all supported either by the literal interpretation of Scripture, or by the testimony of accredited writers. The term Ararat is used in Hebrew to signify the mountainous country to the north and

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east of Assyria. In 2 Kings xix. 37, and Isaiah xxxvii. 38, we are told that the sons of Sennacherib, having assasinated their father, fled for refuge into the land of Ararat, or Armenia, as our translators render it, following the rendering of the Septuagint and Vulgate. Can it be supposed then, that the fugitives would traverse the mountains of Kurdistan, as far as the modern peak of Ararat, or that men, bred up in the luxury and effeminacy of the Assyrian court, would advance one step further in a barbarous, and almost inaccessible region, than was absolutely needful for their safety? We are compelled, therefore, to allow that the term Ararat must be taken as indicating the mountainous country in the vicinity of Nineveh, the same in fact, which is known at the present day by the name of Jebel Giodi or Judi, an evident corruption of the ancient Gordi.*

This supposition derives much additional weight from the authority of the Targumist Jonathan,

* The appellation of the mountains near Jezirah is written in Arabic جودي Judi. But the و waw, is easily substituted for the ر re, and thus جردى Gurdi or Jurdi, might become with little visible alteration جودي Gudi or Judi.

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who in his gloss upon Genesis viii. 4, makes the ark to rest, על טורי דקרדון al toorai d'Kardon, upon the mountains of Kurdon or Gordon, thus almost establishing the identity of the modern Godi or Judi, with the resting place of the ark. With him agree most of the profane writers who have mentioned the Deluge, a list of whom will be found in Bochart's Geographia Sacra, Cap. III. To these, I may add, the modern tradition, still current among the Mohammedans and Christians of Assyria, that Jebel Judi received the survivors of the Deluge. Another remarkable coincidence, is the aptitude of the soil in the valleys of the Judi range for the rearing of the vine. The grape is still much cultivated among the Nestorians, and I regret to say, that they frequently abuse the bounty of Providence in the same manner, that Noah is recorded to have done.

Most interpreters have restricted the plain of Shinar to the immediate vicinity of Babylon. Yet it seems probable, that this appellation embraced the whole of the plain country, from the Judi range to the city of Baghdad, including both shores of the Tigris, bounded to the East by the mountains of Kurdistan, and to the west by the mountains of Sinjar and the confines of Arabia.

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Nor does the conjecture seem improbable, that the name Shinar or Sinar, which in Semetic languages is written with an ע, ain, should have been changed during the lapse of years into Singar or Sinjar, more especially as there are instances on record where this change has been effected.*

From Jezirah, we proceeded by slow journeys to Zakko, and from thence to Mosul, where we crossed the bridge of boats, and were soon resting from our labours under the hospitable roof of Mr. Rassam, the English vice-consul, whose name and merits are so well known to the majority of travellers.

My poor friend B— still continued seriously ill, but the medical art in Mosul had fallen to a very low ebb, and the only Esculapius we could procure was the physician of the Pasha, an Armenian, who had studied in Italy. His knowledge, however, was by no means equal to his good will, and B— was obliged to bring his own medical science to bear upon his own case; at length, after a hard

* One well-known example occurs to me at the present moment of this mutation of the ע, ain, and ג, gimel, of the Semetic dialects. The name Gomorrha is written in Hebrew with ע, ain, and should be pronounced 'Amorrah, the first *a* being sounded with a slight guttural intonation. Yet the Septuagint gives it in Greek characters thus, Γομόῤῥα, Gomorrha.

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struggle, he was pronounced convalescent, and was able to commence the duties of his mission.

The town of Mosul is situated on the western bank of the Tigris, about three hundred miles to the north of Baghdad; behind it, to the westward, extend the plains of Sinjar, in front is the river, and on the opposite side the mounds, commonly called Kuyunjik, which have hitherto been supposed to be the only remains of ancient Nineveh. A little to the south of these, is a village, situated on the top of a low hill, called Nebbi Yunas, or the Prophet Jonah, from a tradition long current in these parts, that Jonah died and was buried there.

Following the course of the road which divides Kuyunjik from the village, the traveller arrives, after a journey of fifteen miles, at a group of rocky hills entitled Jebel Makloub, occupying an isolated position in the midst of a large plain, which extends from the banks of the Tigris to the Judi range.* Behind these, and on either side of them, appear the mountains of Kurdistan, the highest of which are covered with snow during six months

* The name Jebel Judi is only applied at present to the mountains of that range in the vicinity of Jezirah, but to avoid confusion, I have bestowed it according to the ancient usage on the whole chain to the eastward of the plains of Nineveh and Navkoor.

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of the year, and may be plainly seen from the terraces of Mosul.

The houses of this modern Nineveh are built of stone, and profusely ornamented with a kind of marble found in the vicinity. Externally they present little that is pleasing or attractive. As you proceed through the streets, the eye wanders along a connected series of dead walls, which give the city an air of desolation and decay. Few of the houses are in a perfect state, and it is not uncommon to perceive a heap of ruins in the court of a spacious and handsome mansion; the interiors are arranged in the usual Oriental fashion, the apartments being built round a square or oblong court and have rarely any connexion with each other. On one side of this court is a large arched recess, called the Aiwān, the point of which is only three or four feet below the terraced roof. Within the Aiwān are arranged sofas, for the accommodation of visitors and of the family during the hot season, when it is considered unhealthy to remain in the rooms. Most of the houses possess a suite of subterranean apartments, called Serdāb, where the wealthier people retire during the three hot months of the year; these lower rooms are generally handsomely decorated with marble, while in the midst,

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a bubbling fountain diffuses coolness and refreshment throughout the heated and oppressive atmosphere.

The roofs of the houses are perfectly flat, with low balustrades; they prove an agreeable walk in the cool of the evening, and are peculiarly favourable to meditation. Frequently have I enjoyed a solitary promenade on my terrace, my eye fixed on the mounds of Nineveh and the snow-capped mountains of Kurdistan, and my thoughts, perhaps, far away. Thus we read in ancient days of an Apostle going up to the house-top to pray; a strange circumstance in European eyes, but perfectly natural to an Oriental. For my own part, when I wished to be particularly solitary, I always repaired to the roof, and felt myself perfectly cut off from the world below.

The terrace is to the Eastern, in fact, what the study is to the English gentleman, a sort of sanctum into which no one intrudes without special leave. When I was in the court or the Aiwān, even strangers would come in without scruple, seat themselves, and enter unreservedly into conversation, but if they were told I was above, they either went away, or desired my servant to announce them. I never remember a single instance in

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which any other than a very intimate friend ever mounted the stairs. On one occasion, I had a number of Nestorians residing in my house, who were remarkably fond of strolling about the terraces when I was not there, but when I made my appearance above, they always withdrew, lest they should seem to intrude upon my privacy.

For about eight months in the year the weather at Mosul is temperate, though the cold in winter, particularly towards night, is sometimes intense. On these occasions, the houses are generally warmed by wood fires where there is a chimney to the apartment, which is not always the case. In the latter instance the fire is kindled in a small round brazen vessel, with two rings attached to the sides to facilitate its conveyance from one room to the other; the warmth thus obtained is, however, very inconsiderable. During the months of May, June, July, and August, the heat is most intense and intolerable; I could scarcely bear the thin drawers and silken shirt which formed my only clothing within doors while the hot weather lasted. It was indeed a luxury to throw off the tight pantaloons, stiff cravats, and coats of civilized Europe, and give the limbs their full freedom in the loose and flowing garments of the East; yet a strange

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and unaccountable prejudice seems to have induced the great majority of European residents to maintain their uncomfortable and undignified costume, and the traveller who should dare to be so singular as to prefer comfort and common sense, to the scruples and whims of his countrymen, would be treated with ridicule, if not with contempt. It is urged, indeed, that there is more respect paid to the Frank costume, since its introduction as an official garb by the late sultan, and this, doubtless, is the reason, why every man who can boast, even indirectly, of European descent, delights to make himself as frightful and uncomfortable as possible, but if the matter were rightly examined, it might be found that the estimation so much coveted, if it really exists, is shown to the arts and arms of Frangistan and not to her costume.

It is most refreshing during the burning heats of July to walk with bare feet on the marble pavement of the room or on the flags of the court. Even the fastidious sons and daughters of Europe agree during this period to eschew the use of stockings, and sometimes of shoes. One great drawback, however, to this pleasure, is the abundance of scorpions and centipedes during the hot weather; you put your hand to the latch of your

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door, and a black and dangerous scorpion creeps out of the keyhole to exact vengeance for his disturbed peace and comfort. As you lie on your sofa, and stretch forth your fingers to grasp the beads, which are a constant appendage to every resident in the East, your hand falls upon a most unprepossessing looking centipede, who has been quietly contemplating you for the last half hour.

One evening I was seated barefoot in the middle of the court, and had just called for a chibouque, regardless of a black round mass that lay near one of my feet; the servant came with the pipe in his hand, uttered an exclamation, and, hastily withdrawing his slipper, he inflicted two or three vigorous blows on the ground; astonished at the action, I looked in the direction of his attack, and beheld the crushed and battered form of a black scorpion, about five inches long. This incident made me more careful of going barefoot ever after.

After a short stay at the Consulate, I hired a house in the neighbourhood for nine pounds a year. It contained six rooms, a kitchen, and a court, where the sun never penetrated, even during the hottest season of the year. I also engaged a servant, a Papal Chaldean by religion, who was a native of one of the neighbouring

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villages. He spoke only Arabic, Chaldee, and Kurdish, and I trusted by his aid, and that of necessity, soon to master the former. A day or two after his engagement, Toma, for so he was called, desired my permission to spend a few days among his friends, before entering upon his new duties as my man of all work. As it was Christmas, I could not refuse him, and he took his departure. But being desirous to take possession of my new quarters, I determined not to wait for him, but to install myself in the house before his arrival. For this purpose I demanded, and obtained the key, notwithstanding the remonstrances of my Mosulian friends, who deemed the act of sleeping alone in a empty house, an act of great moral courage.

The key was not one of those convenient media of obtaining an entrance, which may be carried commodiously in the waistcoat pocket; it was a long bar of wood, with two projections towards the end, more than a foot in length, and well qualified not only to open a door, but to knock down any one who might attempt to enter it without permission. Armed with this implement of offence and defence, I went to and fro between my own dwelling and the Consulate, generally

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taking my meals, and spending my evenings at the latter.

During my servantless state, I received the attentions and the services of an old Chaldean, who was considered rather a character, and who was one of the hangers on at the Consulate. His figure was gaunt and bony, but attenuated and bare; his dress was of the most scanty description, and he resembled exceedingly the figure of Don Quixote, divested of his arms and warlike accoutrements. But his politeness was most exemplary, and even extra Oriental. At almost every word, and certainly between every sentence he uttered, there occurred the constant repetition of the phrase, Ana Gholamuk, I am thy slave, from which circumstance he was never called by his Baptismal name, but always Ana Gholamuk, which appellation had become so familiar to him, that I doubt whether he would have answered to any other. Poor Ana Gholamuk, however, did not possess a virtue void of suspicion, for on one occasion, he was shrewdly suspected of having purloined sundry articles from my friend B——, who was more than half inclined to have him sent to prison in consequence. But as yet he was blameless, and as far as regarded me, his honesty

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was unimpeachable, probably, because there was nothing left in his way.

With the aid of this faithful retainer, who ever after manifested a particular affection to my kitchen, I managed to conduct my household affairs, until the arrival of my servant Toma, who made his appearance two days behind time, with a long apology, and a present, both of which I was graciously pleased to accept. I now commenced housekeeping in the Oriental style, and rarely found my expenses exceed sixpence per diem.

The European Society at Mosul was of course limited. There was the English Vice Consul Mr. Rassam, his wife an English lady, and her mother, who had come to end her days so many miles away from old England. Besides these, there were the American Presbyterian Missionaries, among whom was then numbered the late lamented Dr. Grant, M. Botta the French Consul, whose name is well known as the discoverer of the antiquities of Khorsabad, ourselves, and an English merchant, who had spent about four years in the country and did not know a syllable of the language. I must not omit to mention the Italian Dominican Friars, who superintended the affairs of the Papal Chaldean Church, but they witheld

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themselves from society, and seemed studiously to avoid the "English heretics."

I began, soon after my arrival, to apply myself to the Arabic language, in which I had no sooner made some proficiency, than I determined to put my mettle to the proof, and make some excursions in the vicinity. Toma was taken into consultation, and undertook to provide the necessary articles. Post horses were hired as far as the village of Bagh Sheikha, and as my own private wants were small, I managed to be on horseback, and crossing the bridge of boats over the Tigris, two days after my design had been formed.

Near the village of Nebbi Yunas is a well, entitled Beer-el-benat, the Well of the Girls, respecting which there seems to be no tradition, except that in the opinion of the wise men of Mosul, it is subject to nightly visits from the Djin. Toma was riding by my side, and had commenced a narrative respecting his sickness while at Diarbekir, and recovery by means of the intercession of St. George, who, he affirmed positively, had appeared to him three times, when a man dressed in white passed by, and seemed to eye us with no friendly countenance. Toma gave his horse a kick, the creature reared, and he uttered a very

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common phrase, "Yinnaal ish sheitān*," "May the devil (alluding to the horse) be cursed."

At the word "Sheitān" the stranger scowled fearfully, his hand sought the hilt of his long dagger, and he overwhelmed Toma with a volley of abuse in a kind of mixed jargon, which I did not understand; the latter began to retaliate, but I bade him come on, and as we were riding forward I asked him the reason of the stranger's anger. He replied, "He is a dog of a Yezidee (may his father be cursed and his grave defiled), and he cannot bear to hear the name of Satan his master, may confusion fall upon him."

"Are there any Yezidees in Bagh Sheikha?" I demanded.

"There are many of them," he rejoined, "and not only there, but in all the villages of the plain, even to the foot of the Kurdish mountains. Do I not know them and their doings, for am not I a son of the villages?"

"What is their belief and where do they worship?" I enquired.

* The word Sheitan is used in Arabic as an equivalent for a daring or mischievous person. Sometimes the application is considered complimentary, and means simply, he is a clever fellow.

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"Upon my head," was his answer, "They believe in the devil and worship him. That is known to everybody; but they have no priests, no altars, and no sacrifice. Their chief church is at Sheikh Adi, and they call those white buildings which you see yonder sacred places."

I looked in the direction indicated and beheld a number of small cone shaped edifices covered with white plaster, which I had at first mistaken for tombs. Each of these temples was entered by an aperture about four feet in height, and wide enough to suffer one person to creep through at a time. I looked in, but perceived nothing except the bare walls. Some of these buildings might have been large enough to contain four persons at once, but scarcely more. Altogether they seemed more adapted to serve as memorials of some person or thing, than to act as places of worship.

We arrived soon after at the village of Bagh Sheikha, prettily situated at the foot of Jebel Makloub. Not far from it, was a plantation of olives, which, viewed from a distance, gave it the appearance of being embosomed in trees. Our arrival excited no little commotion, and the whole of the population who were at leisure, which happened to be all the males, assembled in the mar-

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ket-place to stare at the strangers. The poor women were obliged to be contented with looking at us as they passed, bending under the weight of their numerous tasks. They seemed, indeed, to be the only persons in the village who had anything to do. Toma left me stationary, while he went on with my papers to the Kiahya of the place, a Papal Syrian, in company with whom he speedily returned.

Toma made his appearance in a great rage: he stamped, shouted, and bestowed on the head man all the uncomplimentary epithets, and they are many, in the Arabic and Chaldaic vocabulary.

"What is the matter?" I enquired. "What has he done?"

"Aish amal! what has he done, the unclean; why, he has quartered thy Revelation on a cursed Yezidee. But thou shalt punish his insolence; for, verily, if thou writest to the Pasha, he shall eat the stick exceedingly. May his father—"

But here I interposed, being somewhat weary of listening to vociferation, and of remaining like an equestrian statue in the middle of the square. I assumed a dignified air, and expressing in broken Arabic my sorrow that Christians should have so little hospitality as to refuse shelter to one of their

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own faith, I bade Toma lead the way to the Yezidee's house. He obeyed, reluctantly.

"It is the best house in the place," remonstrated the Kiahya, submissively, as, completely crestfallen, he followed in the rear.

"I believe it, oh Kiahya," I replied; "for, bil hock, truly, you Syrians are a poor people; you have no money nor houses."

"I did not mean that," said the Kiahya.

"You are all dogs, you villagers, and may eat dirt," growled Toma.

And with this polite speech, we arrived at the door of the Yezidee.

It had a clean and neat exterior, very different from the dirty huts that surrounded it; and the air of the owner, who had stepped out to welcome us, very much preposessed me in his favour. His look was melancholy, but not servile, and he addressed himself to the cringing Kiahya with the appearance of one who was conscious of belonging to a despised and persecuted race, yet had preserved his self-respect and independence of character unaltered by the conviction.

He looked doubtfully at me for a few minutes, and then inquired of Toma whether I was a Christian.

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"Christian?" exclaimed Toma, "Christian? To be sure he is, and a better Christian than the swine of this village. For several years," continued Toma, addressing himself to the crowd of villagers who were lounging about the door, "for several years have I eaten the bread of the English, and can testify that they are good Christians, who believe truly in our Lord the Messiah and our Lady Mary the Virgin. What more would you require," said Toma, looking triumphantly at the Kiahya, as with a view to confound him still more, he drew out an Arabic translation of our Prayer Book, which I had given him, and counted up the different festivals of the Virgin and Saints, reading them aloud for the edification of the crowd. "Who shall say now," he triumphantly enquired, "that the English are not Christians?"

"Saheeh! saheeh! it is true, it is true," responded the crowd, among whom were several Mahommedans, "the English are Christians, and believe in the Saints."

The Yezidee's countenance brightened. "It is enough," he said, taking my hand and laying it upon his breast; "you are a Christian. Enter, my lord, and may peace be with you."

I followed him into a small but neat apartment,

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the floor of which was covered with carpets, which he kindly permitted to remain during my stay. He spoke some words in Kurdish to two women, who had followed us into the room, and they brought in my bed, spread it in one corner, and presently sent me a bowl of Yavort, or sour milk, a drink much prized by the Turks. My host seated himself opposite to me, and I endeavoured, with the occasional assistance of Toma, to draw him into conversation; but he either knew very little of the tenets of his sect, or was not disposed to be communicative. He told me that his people hated the Mahommedans, and loved the Christians; that from my red cap, and other parts of my dress, he had, at first, taken me for a Moslem; but praise be to God, I was a Christian instead. He advised me to go to the great temple of Sheikh Adi, where I should be welcome, and see many wonderful things.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a crowd of visitors, headed by the priest of the Papal Syrians, a short, pompous man with a nasal twang in his speech, and a most self-satisfied air. They seated themselves, and the conversation soon fell upon the English.

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"They have no religion, wonderful to say," began one of the party.

"Yes, yes:" said another, "they believe in our Lord Jesus, but not in our Father, the Pope."

"But they have no churches," remonstrated Number one.

Toma here interposed. "He had seen," he said, "our service performed in a chapel at Mosul, which Kass Georgios (my friend B.) had fitted up in a style like their own, and there was consecration every Sunday, and prayers every day; and the English fasted also, for, behold, here it was written in their book."

"That may be," was the answer, "but are we fools, Oh man, do we not know, that they do all this to deceive us?"

Toma's choler was rising, but he was afraid of the Priest, whose hand he had devoutly kissed when he entered; and merely remarked, apologegetically, "Well, they are good people."

The Clergyman had been puffing away in silence at the pipe, which, according to eastern etiquette, I had handed him when he sat down; but he now deemed it derogatory to his dignity to listen any longer to observations from others, on a point

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concerning his own profession. I could easily perceive that he was the learned man of the village: and well might he be, for he understood Arabic, Syriac, Chaldee, and Kurdish. He spoke with the air of a man who has been considering his subject carefully, and has thoroughly mastered it at last.

"The English *are* Christians, and have churches; but they only go to them once a month, and take the Lord's Supper once in twenty years. On the latter occasion the Priest stands on a high place, that he may not be torn in pieces by the crowd who rush tumultuously forward, snatch the consecrated bread out of his hands and scramble for it. They are also allowed to marry as many wives as they please, and some of them have more than twenty. They are a poor and beggarly people, and have a heavy debt which they are unable to pay. They are obliged to borrow large sums of the King of France, who has obtained by this means a kind of dominion over them."

At the conclusion of his oratiotn, he speaker looked at me as if he had been advancing heavy and unanswerable truths, which I might dislike, but could not controvert.

"Ma hu Saheeh, is it not true?" he asked.

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"It is a great falsehood," I answered, calmly, as I took the pipe from my lips.

The assembly seemed divided, and appeared to expect that I should enter still more into the defence of my nation.

My speech, in Arabic, was feeble, but I contrived, by help of the Prayer Book, to maintain my ground; and, after a little, forced even the Priest to confess that the English might be Christians, and they might have the Sacrament oftener than once in twenty years; but as to their poverty, that was a known fact, and could not be controverted. Had they not a debt which amounted to many millions of Piastres? Of course I could not deny this: but my attempts to explain the benefit of that national blessing were utterly unavailing, and my hearers departed with the firm and invincible conviction, that the English were a beggarly and bankrupt nation.

My host remained till they all had left. "That Priest," he said, "is a conceited fellow. When I first came here, he tried to stir up the people against me, and I had much sorrow from him. Bey, what you have said is the truth, and the English are a good people. Are there any of our race among

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them in your own land? They tell me that some of our brethren live in peace in the country of Hind, under the English Sultan."

My reply was cut short by Toma, who had been escorting the priest to the outer door, where he asked him, with great earnestness, at what hour he would say mass on the following morning. To his credit be it said, he was a great church goer, and had a considerable respect for the clergy. Nevertheless he could not help saying, as he prepared the bed, "My master, that priest is a great hunzeer,* but, Inshallah, he shall be disappointed to-morrow, for he may wait long enough before I go to his service."

* Pig.

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CHAPTER X.

Monastery of St. Matthew. Mahommedan Veneration for Christian Tombs. Toma's Story. An Alarm. The Gazelle. A night View of the Plain of Nineveh. Shereef Bey. Khoorsabad. A Discovery.

One of my objects in leaving Mosul had been the accomplishment of a design, which I had lately entertained, of visiting the deserted monastery of St. Matthew, distant about six miles from the village of Bagh Sheikha. As our post horses had been hired only as far as the latter place, I directed Toma to procure some mules from the village, which after some trouble he succeeded in doing. In these matters much must depend upon the disposition and personal feeling of the Kiahya, who rules absolute over the villages. In the present instance that magistrate was not very friendly disposed, for being a most bigoted adherent of the Syrian Papal Church,

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he looked upon an Englishman as a heretic and infidel, whom it was the duty of a good Christian to harass and annoy as much as possible. The priest had shown himself, the day before, decidedly inimical, and his influence in the village was by no means inconsiderable. In the course of conversation, he had accused the English of being worse than Pagans, of instigating the Nestorians at Ouromiah to break crosses, pollute their churches, and abandon the weekly celebration of the Holy Communion. He alluded to the operations of the American Missionaries in that city, and I could hardly convince him that they were not Englishmen, nor even members of the English Church.

After he had seen our Liturgy, he began to waver somewhat in his former opinion; but it was quite clear that, in times past, he had pictured an Englishman as the representative of everything vicious and impious. Charity compels me to hope, that these calumnies against our nation and religion have not been disseminated by the Emissaries of the Roman Church to forward a political and religious end, but it is singular that they should be generally most prevalent among members of that communion, and that when they appear elsewhere, they can almost always be traced to a similar source.

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Our road to the monastery lay at the foot of the range called Jebel Makloub, which rises in the midst of the great plain extending from the Kurdish mountains to the Tigris. We were accompanied by two villagers, at the earnest request of Toma, who feared alike the Kurds, and the goblins that were said to play strange nocturnal pranks in the ruined and deserted monastery. Our escort had girded on two rusty swords, which act appeared to afford them much satisfaction and courage, as though the possession of arms had been sufficient of itself to deter all assailants from attacking us.

After a ride of two hours over stones and large fragments of rock which threatened at each moment to impede our further progress, we arrived at the mouth of a narrow gorge which separates the mountain of St. Matthew from Jebel Makloub. At the foot of the former was a small Kurdish village, inhabited by Mohammedans, who cast no very friendly looks at us as we rode by. The ascent of the mountain was by a winding path, rendered difficult and dangerous by the fragments of rock which blocked it up: and in some places obliged us to dismount, and climb over them the best way we could.

From the ledge, on which the monastery was situated, a gentle slope, covered with green grass

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descended about one-fourth of the elevation of the former, and was bounded by a low wall as it were of rocky fragments, which might have been the result of manual labour. Skirting this slope to the left, we soon arrived in front of the grand entrance, over which are the apartments formerly occupied by the Syrian Jacobite Bishop of Mosul, who, during the prevalence of the hot season in the town, generally made this place his summer residence. When Mr. Rich visited the Monastery (in 1820) he found it tenanted by the Monks and their Episcopal Superior, under whom the establishment was then flourishing in full vigour. Since then, however, it has undergone a total change, and has been entirely abandoned by its inmates.

Not many years ago, as the monks were celebrating the midnight service of their Church, a band of Kurds crossed the summit of the mountain, burst into the monastery, broke open the church doors, and defiled the sanctuary with the blood of the worshippers. Ever since that fatal night the building has been deserted, and the superstitious peasant tells of lights seen dancing amid the ruins, of fearful and spectral forms gliding along the rocky terraces, of wails and moanings, and strange and supernatural sounds that have broken the stillness of the midnight hour.

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The monastery consists of four courts, now covered with grass and surrounded by the ruins of the cells which formed originally the dwellings of the monks. The stone bench of the kitchen was still black with the fires that had been kindled upon it, and the refectory was in a tolerable state of preservation. But the part most perfect and uninjured was the Church of the Monastery, a fine building with a porch before the entrance. The interior consisted of two aisles, divided from each other by a row of stout pillars supporting saracenic arches, which were terminated by a wall passing along the right side of the choir, and dividing the sanctuary from the small chapel on the south side, formerly used as a baptistery.

A low balustrade of stone work divided the choir from the nave, the former of which contained two octangular desks of marble, from which the lessons were wont to be read. At the east end of the choir a stone wall, with three arched entrances, supplied the place of a screen, and separated the choir from the sanctuary. Within this wall was the great altar, a square block of stone, raised on three steps, behind which appeared a semicircular recess. Within the recess was a bench of similar form, in the centre of which was an elevated seat or throne, surmounted

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by a stone canopy. Here was the place of the bishop and his clergy, at the celebration of the Liturgy. During the other offices they stood in the second division of the church, which I have entitled the choir.

On the north side of the great altar which occupied a central and detached position in the middle of the sanctuary, was a small chapel, containing a stone table attached to the wall. This table is termed the Prothesis, and upon it the elements are placed before they are carried to the great altar. The corresponding chapel to the south of the latter contained the font, a large vessel of stone, well adapted for the purposes of immersion, which the Eastern Churches practise in lieu of sprinkling. To the north of the choir was an entrance, leading to a small chamber, which contained the monuments of several Syrian Jacobite Bishops, among others of the celebrated Oriental historian and Divine, Gregorius Bar Hebræus, called also Aboulfarage.

One of the men who had accompanied us from Bagh Shiekha was a Mohammedan, and, to my great surprise, he knelt respectfully before each of the tombs and kissed them repeatedly, and with great veneration. On asking him the reason why he thus reverenced the memory of Christians, he replied,

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that they were good men, and professors of Islam. This term in fact includes not only Mahommedans, but all Jews until the time of our Saviour, and all Christians from that period till the appearance of the false prophet.

As we moved about the different parts of the church we disturbed large assemblages of bats and owls, the flapping of whose wings dislodged portions of the plaster from the roof, and covered us with dust. After having satisfied my curiosity I returned to the porch. Between it and the church was a narrow staircase leading to a small room, one window of which looked into the sacred building, and the other into a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin. It had served as a kind of vestry in former times, and was used by visitors to the monastery as a sleeping apartment.

My dinner or supper having been cooked below, I ate and drank, and was about to prepare myself for repose. But hardly had I finished my meal, when a violent storm came on, the wind howled dismally through the old arches and ruined cells, the rain began to pour down in torrents, and imagination might almost trace, in the mournful echo of the blasts, the origin of those moans and lamentations which had so often been heard below. Toma and his companions had originally taken up their station in a room under-

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neath; but, when the storm began, they appeared with rueful faces, and requested permission to keep me company, for Toma remarked, that his solicitude for my safety could not allow him to remain at a distance from me. The others complained that the rain had invaded their apartment, and therefore they hoped that they might be allowed to share mine.

Although I felt that their society would be little protection in case of a visitation from either Kurds or Genii, I could not refuse to have pity on their terrors, and consented to grant their request. The villagers from Bagh Shiekha had brought a good supply of wood, from which they supplied the materials for a cheerful fire. The wind and rain without had not abated in violence, and feeling indisposed for sleep, I requested Toma to continue the story of his illness at Diarbekir, which had been interrupted on a previous occasion by the appearance of the Yezidee. My worthy Chaldean adherent loved nothing better than to hear himself talk; and having by my directions taken his seat cross-legged on the floor he began his tale:—

"I have informed you already, oh, my master, that I was the servant of an Englishman, who, like yourself, was a traveller in this country. He was a good man, but rather hasty and impatient, as, with your

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leave, most Englishmen are. Instead of journeying, as we do, for about an hour, and then alighting to smoke a pipe and to drink coffee, it was nothing but 'Yallah, yallah'* from the beginning of the day's march to the end. When we arrived at a station, only a few hours rest was allotted to us, and away went my master again, as if some evil demon was in pursuit of him. Well I could not endure all this haste, for my motto, and that of every eastern man is as you doubtless know, 'Yawash Yawash'†. So when we reached Diarbekir, I fell sick, and was unable to proceed any further.

"My master was very sorry, for as I told you he was a good man, but had I been his brother he would not have waited for me. So he said, 'Toma, Inshallah, I depart from Diarbekir at two o'clock to-morrow morning, but I shall leave you here, pay you the whole of your wages and give you a present beside, so that, when you are well, you may return in peace to your village.' Before I could thank him, he was gone to make arrangements for me, and ere I had recovered from my surprise I was comfortably settled in the house of one of our priests, whom my master begged to take care of me, leaving him money for

* An exclamation used to express haste, and to hurry on the Tatar or Surredjee, who accompanies travellers.

† Gently, gently.

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necessary expenses, and he also gave me money, saying, Addio, Toma, may God restore you.

"So I kissed his hand, and lo! he was gone, and I heard the trampling of his horse's feet as I was counting the sum he had left me. I need not tell you that it was more than my due, for the English, although hasty, are a generous people, may God preserve them.

"My illness increased, and though the good priest, my host, who understood medicine much better, as he said, than any Frank doctor, did his best for me; I grew worse and worse. My mind began to wander, and often I seemed to be in my own village again, with my old friends and neighbours around me, far from Diabekir and its black walls. Once I thought that I went into our village church and prayed before the picture of St. George, that Father Antoun, may God have mercy upon him, brought from Rome. And when I awoke I reasoned with myself thus, why should I not ask the good St. George to help me, for it seems that man can do nothing for me. So I prayed to the good saint for his intercession and aid before I slept, and in the night he stood before me, dressed like the picture in the church, except that he seemed to be on foot. His countenance looked pleasant, and smiling, so that I took courage

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and said "O Mar Georgios, pity me." Then he smiled graciously on me, and seemed to touch me with his spear, after which he disappeared, and I awoke. Then sending for Kas * Stephan, I related to him my dream.

But Kas Stephan said, "Isbor, have patience my son, for it may be that the Holy George will again appear to thee." And behold on that night, and on the next also, he came as before, and I began to recover, and soon after was completely restored, whereupon I returned with joy, and made an offering to St. George in my own village church, telling my story to all the villagers, who wondered thereat exceedingly."

"Toma," I said, when he had concluded, "there is but one Mediator between God and man, even our Lord Yesua. St. George we know little of, but I hope and believe, that he was a holy man who would have counselled you, if you could have asked his advice, to pray directly to God himself. Perhaps, however, it may have pleased Allah to forgive you for what you did in ignorance, and with a good intention, and to look rather on your faith, and earnest

* Kas for Kasees means literally Presbyter, and is always prefixed to the names of Priests by the Chaldean and Syrian Christians.

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desire to obtain a supernatural blessing through the medium of His servant."

I might have gone on farther in my admonition, but when I had proceeded thus far, Toma laid his hand on my arm, and entreated me to be silent, as he heard, he said, the sound of footsteps. I listened, and could clearly distinguish the falling of rubbish, and other noises, which seemed to indicate the approach of intruders. Snatching up my gun, I sallied forth in spite of Toma's entreaties, and followed the sounds, which appeared to be receding, into the court below. Another fall of rubbish directed my attention to the ramparts of the monastery, where, in full relief against the sky, I beheld the figure of a large gazelle, its wild watchful eyes directed towards the porch.

The storm was passing over, and the moon was shining in her full brightness, with that clear brilliancy which is witnessed only in Eastern skies. Sheltered by a pillar, I watched the movements of the gazelle. It stood for some minutes as if irresolute, and then leaped over the rampart: I rushed forward, and clambering over some rubbish, reached the place where I first saw it. Looking down I beheld the beautiful creature bounding from ledge to ledge along the side of the mountain, as if exulting in its wild free-

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dom, and defying the swiftest efforts of pursuers. I was enjoying the sight when Toma and his companions joined me. Feeling in no mood for their society, I dismissed them to their repose, and continued to gaze with much interest on the scene before me.

At the foot of the mountain lay the plains of Athur, once the site of that great and mighty Nineveh, where reigned the first conquerors whom the earth ever knew. Happy might it have been for her children, had the era of conquest, spoliation, and violence, terminated with the downfall and ruin of that haughty city, which first taught the lessons of of ambition, and crime to those who too eagerly received and carried them into action. Yet what a moral might be derived from the present condition of the capital of Assur. In lieu of lofty palaces and gorgeous temples, the eye surveys only the mounds composed of their dust, or the miserable collections of huts which have arisen on their site. The gardens where Sardanapalus revelled are wasted and desolate, the sounds of soft and luxurious music that once floated on the soft Assyrian breezes, have yielded to the silence of devastation or decay. Nothing could be more striking indeed than the stillness which prevailed. Not a sound interrupted the profound repose

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of nature and of man. Even the cry of the wild animals which disturbs the solitude of ancient Babylon, was not heard here. It was the calmness, the dignified decay of ruined majesty, not the blighting operation of a curse which the crimes and the sins of past days had called forth. The relics of Babylon impressed me with awe, almost with terror, those of Nineveh inspired more a feeling of sympathy and mournful regret.

As I pace that lonely rampart in my midnight walk, visions of the past seem to rise from yonder deserted plains, and to present themselves before me. Lofty palaces uprear their towering pinnacles in every direction. Terraced gardens, where art has done its utmost to rival, and, perhaps, to outvie nature, appear filled with choicest fruits, and garnished with flowers of the most varied and brilliant hues. Artificial streams pursue their winding course amid these luxuriant plantations, and temper with refreshing coolness the heats of a summer sun. On their banks a thousand curiously wrought bowers receive the gay troups of revellers, who, crowned with garlands, spend their hours as if life were designed to be one long and uninterrupted revel. From his marble tower, the Chaldean sage tracks the silent course of the heavenly watchers, as they gleam with redoubled

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brilliancy from the blue and cloudless expanse above. Glittering bands of warriors pass to and fro, exhibiting to the gaze of the curious, the spoils of distant India and Media, mingled with the trophies torn from the cities of the sacred land. Suddenly in the midst of that careless and rejoicing city, a worn and travel-stained form pronounces in a loud and unearthly voice—"Yet, forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." The monarch quits his throne, the people change their habits of festivity for sackcloth, and all prostrate themselves before the God of the stranger. The supplication is heard, and, for a time at least, the doom of Nineveh is averted.

The vision changes, and in lieu of the gay and joyous scenes, which first attracted the eye, or the mournful and penitential groups that succeeded to them, the imagination pictures the public places of the mighty city, filled with anxious and apprehensive crowds who recall with trembling earnestness the fearful predictions of a Hebrew Seer. From the neighbouring regions of Alkosh, have gone forth the accents of doom. The bloody city, the city of robbery, and lies must perish. Hosts of barbarians rush from the neighbouring hills, overpower the effeminate and feeble inhabitants; and Nineveh falls, even as a gallant ship that founders in the

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midst of the solitary and trackless ocean, leaving no trace of her existence, no floating memorial of her fate *.

Returning to my room, I slept undisturbed till the next morning, when we prepared to return to Bagh Sheikha. While Toma and his companions were getting things in readiness, I set out to examine the locality of the monastery, having arranged to meet the mules at the bottom of the mountain of St. Matthew. Above us, rose the summit of the eminence to a considerable height, the rocky side having been hollowed in many places, to form retreats for those who considered life in the monastery as not sufficiently solitary for their tastes. The paths leading to these caves were steep, narrow and dangerous, but custom had doubtless rendered them less difficult to the devotees, who were accustomed to attend even the midnight services in the church below.

Descending the mountain, I came to a hollow cavern, containing a dropping well, near which was a kind of reservoir or tank, excavated by the hand of nature or art in the recesses of the rock. It was full

* The greatest obscurity seems to envelop the final fate of Nineveh. After a brief, but extensive dominion over Western Asia, its name disappears altogether from the pages of history. Diodorus informs us that it was destroyed by Arbaces the Mede, and Belesis, a Babylonian, supposed to be the same with Nabopolasser.

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of water, supplied from an internal spring, and communicated with a well which we had observed above in one of the apartments of the bishop's house.

On arriving at Bagh Sheikha, I resumed my old quarters in the house of the Yezidee, who daily treated us with increasing kindness and hospitality. My opponents the Priest and the Kiahya, were busily engaged in collecting the salian. The season of application for taxes is a period of no small tribulation to the inhabitants of an Eastern village. No inconsiderable amount of cunning and chicanery is called into action, to oppose the violence of Government agents, who generally apply the bastinado as the last resort. Nature, however, has endowed the Oriental peasant with the faculty of endurance to an extraordinary degree. Men have frequently allowed their feet to be beaten almost to a jelly, before they would yield up their secreted earnings.

Soon after my return, I was honoured with a visit from Shereef Bey, the proprietor of the village, and the adjoining lands. He viewed some maps, which I showed him, with the curiosity of a child. Though well versed in Arabic literature, he seemed astonished and even scandalised, when I informed him that the world was round. He told me that Arabic was a

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low vulgar dialect, and advised me to study Turkish. The interview terminated with a request for medicine, but I had unfortunately none to bestow. On enquiry, I found that the Bey was the physician of the whole village, and had considerable practice, as it was his custom to give both medicine and advice gratis. He required the Frank drugs for his own use, having probably little faith in the nostrums of the country.

In the afternoon, I returned the visit, and found the Bey's mansion a large, irregularly built edifice, the court of which was, as usual, crowded with dependants. The sitting room was a long apartment, furnished with diwan mattrasses, extended on the ground, and not raised upon frames as at Mosul. A large number of the head men of the neighbouring villages sat cross-legged on these, leaning against the wall, and smoking their long pipes. At the end of the room, two diwans slightly raised from the ground, were appropriated to the Bey and his visitor. He rose to receive me, and, after the usual salutations, requested me to be seated.

While pipes and coffee were being served, my host began to question me about Europe. He asked whether England was larger than Russia, and if it was true that every Englishman had twenty wives,

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whether France were not an island, and Germany subject to the Pope of Rome. "He had heard," he continued, "that the English had a kind of machine, which traversed immeasurable distances, in a short period of time, through the air."

"Ajaib, ajaib,—wonderful! wonderful!" ejaculated the whole room.

"You must know," said the Bey, condescendingly, "that when the English want to take a city, they cause this machine to hover over it, and then they begin with cannons and bombshells to demolish the houses! verily the English are a wonderful people!"

After this, my explanation of the nature and use of balloons was thought tame and flat, and was interrupted by the Bey, who enquired, "whether the English had any religion, and whether they fasted?"

"They have fast days appointed," said the Priest, "in their Book of Prayers, but they do not abstain from eating on those occasions, they only substitute fish for meat."

"The wiser men, they," rejoined the Bey, who probably spoke feelingly, as it was Ramadan.

When I had finished my pipe, I rose to take my leave, having impressed the Bey with a more favourable opinion than he had hitherto entertained of the English. I am afraid, however, that he re-

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tained respecting us, much the same sentiments that we should hold concerning the Chinese or Japanese, and considered us a race of civilized barbarians.

On my return to the house of the Yezidee, I distributed several small Arabic translations of the Elements of Geography among the villagers, and bade Toma hire some horses for our journey. While he was gone, a Mohammedan entered, followed by several of the villagers, and addressing himself to me, said,—

"O Bey, why are you lingering here, when wonderful things are doing at Khoorsabad? Upon my head, the workmen of the French Balios,* have discovered the treasure halls of Nineveh, and the idols which those Kafirs, (may the curse of Allah light upon their graves!) used to worship."

"Surely, you jest, O man!" I replied, "you mean they have found some bricks with writing upon them."

"No, on my eye," he answered, "they are idols and nothing else. Did I not see them as I passed through?"

This intelligence, which I received with no small degree of incredulity, determined me to change my route, and go first to Khoorsabad. The Mohammedan remained till Toma's arrival with the horses,

* Consul.

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and finding he still persisted in his story, I took the road leading to the place where the discovery had been made. My host the Yezidee refused all compensation, so taking a kind leave of him, I left the village tolerably satisfied, upon the whole, with my sojourn there.

For some days previous to my departure from Mosul, M. Botta, the amiable and intelligent Consul of France at that place, had been making excavations on the largest of the Nineveh mounds, called Kuyunjik by the Turks, but had found nothing but bricks with arrow-headed inscriptions. It would have seemed then to me, and others at Mosul, the height of improbability to anticipate that any more substantial relics of ancient Assyria might be brought to light, or to imagine that within a few feet of the green turf, which our horses' feet had so often trodden, there lay buried some of the most singular and interesting memorials of a nation's greatness, that ever survived the wreck of time.

My disbelief and unwillingness to credit the relation of the Mohammedan villager were succeeded by emotions of almost stupifying surprise, when, after hastening through the village of Khoorsabad, I dismounted near the excavations, and cast a wondering glance at the scene which there presented itself.

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Slowly emerging from the excavated soil, was the upper part of a stone slab, containing in bas relief, the representation of a siege, as I learned afterwards, when the workmen, stimulated by my presence, had cleared away the earth from the lower extremity. It is impossible for me to say, whether astonishment or gratification predominated, as I gazed on these remains of a mighty empire. Nineveh had latterly occupied my thoughts very much, but I should almost as soon have expected to encounter the figure of Ninus himself, as to witness the discovery of these relics of his far famed city. Yet, even while I hailed this first fruits of Assyrian researches, I doubted whether the slabs would bear transmission to Europe. Those tablets seemed too fragile to endure the rude mode of conveyance, which must be adopted in a country so little famed for progress in the mechanical arts. They will be broken before they reach Mosul, I murmured to myself, as I stood wrapt in contemplation at the edge of the excavation. I am happy in being able to add that this prophecy has been falsified, and that my old acquaintances of Khoorsabad, with many others, have been conveyed in safety to Paris, and lodged securely within the Bibliothèque du Roi.

As M. Botta was expected to arrive the next

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evening at the village, I determined to await his coming, even at the personal sacrifice of passing a night in one of the wretched mud cabins in the vicinity of the excavations. Having nothing to occupy my attention, I walked into the neighbouring plain, which was only partially cultivated. As I strolled along, I perceived, at the distance of about a mile from the village, what I at first supposed to be column of stone. On approaching nearer, however, I found it was an altar or table of triangular form, supporting a round top or platform, of about two inches in thickness, bearing an inscription in cuneiform characters.

When M. Botta arrived, I made over to him my discovery, upon which he informed me that his workmen had found a similar one in another part of the plain. It is wonderful to reflect on, and almost impossible to realize the fact that this altar must have remained in the place where I found it, for nearly three thousand years, and perhaps for a longer period: exposed to the weather, to the injuries of time, and to the misuses to which the ignorant villagers might have subjected it, still retaining its form and appearance unimpaired. The men who had offered sacrifice upon it, the haughty monarchs, the proud priests, had long since become dust, and their

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very names had been forgotten; while the mute and inanimate stone alone remained to recall the existence of an empire. A humiliating reflection for the vanity of man!

The village of Khoorsabad is distant about fifteen miles to the north-east of Mosul; and is built on an artificial mound, rising about ninety feet from the plain. Its present name is supposed to be an abbreviation of the word Khosroobad, the city of Khosroo or Cyrus. If this be true, these remains may have been the work of the same people who executed the sculptures and inscriptions at Persepolis, described by Sir R. K. Porter. The arrow-headed characters seem to have been common to the three nations of Persia, Chaldea, and Assyria; and perhaps formed the vehicle for the communication, or perhaps rather concealment, of religious mysteries and astronomical observations.*

It is possible, that the mound on which the village is situated, would, if carefully examined, fully repay the trouble of excavating. For a small sum, the villagers would willingly quit their mud dwellings, and establish themselves elsewhere. Constant trouble and interruptions, however, must be anticipated from

* Pliny speaks of "DCCXX annorum observationes siderum coctilibus laterculis inscriptæ." Nat. Hist. i. VII. c.

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the Pasha of Mosul, should such a step be attempted. Ignorant themselves, and brutally indifferent to the remains of antiquity, the Turks can never be persuaded that old sculptures and inscriptions are the objects searched for by the enterpising Frank. They think that he is looking for buried treasures, or some long hidden parchments or documents, concealed by the former owners of the country; the possession of which would cause it to revert to the fortunate discoverer. Among the better classes, jealousy and prejudice, as well as the hatred and contempt for Christians, so inherent in every Mussulman breast, supply the same opposition offered by the superstition of the vulgar.

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CHAPTER XI.

The Plain. Sheikh Adi. The Yezidees.

After spending an agreeable evening with M. Botta, under the hospitable shade of the tent which he had brought with him from Mosul, I began to think of pursuing my journey to Sheikh Adi. My preparations were made after my return to the hut where I had taken up my abode, and before daylight, I was on horseback, being anxious to avoid, as much as possible, the rays of the mid-day sun. My road lay across the undulating plain which extends from the foot of the Gordyæan Mountains to the banks of the Tigris. During our ride, we encountered perpetually, mounds of the same shape and size as that on which Khoorsabad is situated. As we drew nearer the mountains, we passed several Yezidee

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villages, in the vicinity of which might be observed the small cone-shaped monuments, which had already attracted my attention.

At length we reached the entrance of the pass leading to Sheikh Adi, and experienced the most grateful sensations from the change which had taken place in the temperature. Instead of the heat of the plain—a heat which had of late been rendered more intolerable by the glare reflected from the low stony hills over which we had passed, the cool breezes from the mountains played around us, while the high ranges on each side of the pathway enabled us to bid defiance to the sun. In the centre of the pass a stream, almost choked with stunted willows, crept lazily along, forming a not unpleasing contrast with the cascades, which might be discerned at the end of the numerous ravines that ever and anon opened at our side. The mountains were covered with green, and the lofty oaks mingling their verdant foliage with each other, presented an agreeable spectacle to one who had scarcely seen a tree since his departure from Mosul.

After a ride of an hour, we reached the entrance of the valley, at the termination of which, arising from a thick mass of foliage, might be discerned the spires and dome of Sheikh Adi. I despatched Toma

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on in front to prepare the guardians of the tomb for my visit. Tired as I was, the scene was so enchanting, that I could hardly help checking the speed of my horse, and proceeding more leisurely that I might enjoy it. A quiet rivulet flowed through the midst of the valley, and supplied the inmates of the Temple with the means of ablution and purification.

After I had passed the outer gate, my attention was directed to numerous tanks or cisterns, containing the purest and clearest water I have ever seen or tasted.

At the inner entrance, the subordinate ministers of the shrine met me, with expressions of kindly welcome. They were clad in garments of black, which gave a sombre air to their appearance. I dismounted, and passed through an outer court, at the side of which were several cells or recesses, which they told me were for the accommodation of the pilgrims at the great annual festival. This outer court, was separated by a wall from the inner inclosure, which surrounds the edifice containing the tomb. To the right hand was a dwelling for the ministers and guardians, on the second floor of which I took up my abode. Several Nestorians from the mountains shared the hospitality of our hosts. They spoke in high terms to Toma of the

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kindness which they had always experienced from the Yezidees.

After my dinner, I received a visit from two of the servants of the tomb, accompanied by a middle aged woman, who was treated with great respect, and who proved to be the mother of one of my visitors. They knew but little of Arabic, so that my conversation with them was carried on through the medium of Toma, who spoke Kurdish fluently. The old lady received with great pleasure the pipe which one of the men handed her, and showed no want of acquaintance with the art of smoking. I endeavoured, but with small success, to gain from my hosts some information as to their tenets and peculiar habits. They seemed to know little, or to be unwilling to reveal what they knew. I was enabled afterwards to collect more intelligence respecting them, which will be communicated in another paragraph.

In the morning, I expressed my wish to view the interior of the temple. It forms one side of the inner court, and the outward wall is covered with emblems, which may, or may not bear a mystical character. One of the most conspicuous of these was the figure of a serpent, which might convey an allusion to the Evil Principle. On entering, I found

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the interior resembled very much that of a church with two aisles, divided by a range of arches. On the right of the door appeared a large tank filled with water, which my guides informed me was used for baptism. To the left were several sepulchral cells, before which, lamps were burning. Curtains of printed calico suspended before the entrance of each concealed from view the sarcophagus within. The last of these cells contains the tomb of Sheikh Adi himself, and bears on it an inscription taken from the Koran.

I shall now take this opportunity of furnishing the reader with all the information which I have been able to collect respecting the Yezidees, and will then offer a few remarks on the probable origin of this singular sect.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, Hyde in his "Religio Veterum Persarum," is the first European writer who mentions the Yezidees. His account, though full of prejudicial statements derived from the writings of their enemies, contains some curious particulars, a few of which I shall now insert.

"The Yezidees of Kurdistan greatly esteem black dogs, and everything else black, on account of the colour of the devil, whom they venerate and call ustad, or master. The Priest of the Yezidees also

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who, like a fit minister of such a master, goes clad in a sombre garb, is styled by them the Yezidee disciple, but all men of this kind are called by the Mohammedans and Christians, Sheitani, that is, belonging to Satan, because they acknowledge Satan to be their Peer, Sheikh, or Guide, after that saying of the Orientals, "Whosoever has no guide, the devil will guide him." These deny the resurrection, and hold a middle opinion between the Mohammedans and Pagans. They believe in the existence of God, but they do not worship Him."*

He goes on to accuse them of committing certain crimes and impurities at their great annual festival. The report of this writer may be taken as fairly representing the view entertained of the Yezidees by the Mahommedans and Christians of Mosul and the vicinity. Yet the candid inquirer into their tenets must remember that similar calumnies existed in early times with regard to the Primitive believers. The love of exaggeration and of the marvellous, which is the ruling passion of the Oriental, may well account for the propagation and reception of these monstrous charges.

The sect commonly called Yezidees refuse that appellation, as a mark of reproach. They prefer the

* Hyde, "Historia Religionis Veterum Persarum." Appendix.

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title of Daseni, which is supposed to be derived from the name of an ancient province of Assyria. In contradiction to the assertion of Hyde, that they prefer black as a favourite colour, I must oppose the fact, that not any of them wear it, except the guardians, or servants, of the tomb of Sheikh Adi. Their priesthood, if I may give it this title, possesses, like that of the Christians, three grades, answering to the orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon.* They pay a great veneration to fire, and to the rising sun. They practise circumcision, and a rite similar in administration to Baptism. A writer, quoted by Hyde, represents them as holding wine in great esteem, and of giving to it the appellation of the blood of Christ.

Much mystery seems to exist as to the object of their worship. Persons of tried veracity have assured me, that at the village of Baadri is preserved, with great care, the figure of a peacock, made of tin, and termed, Malek Taoos, or King Peacock. The Yezidees at Sheikh Adi admitted their belief in Malek Taoos. When questioned as to his whereabouts, they

* It is doubtful whether those termed by the Yezidees Peers, are to be considered a separate grade. I have heard of their existence, but I never encountered any persons belonging to this order. Their name, and that of the lowest grade, the Fakeers, is Persian.

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inquired where is Jesus? The answer was, everywhere. Upon which they rejoined, so is Malek Taoos. They profess generally great love to Christians, and to Christianity, and I have even heard the opinion expressed, that they would willingly embrace our religion, were it not that they fear the rapacity of the Government might make this change of faith a pretence for extortion and violence.

The respect with which the Yezidees regard the Evil Principle, renders them angry and annoyed when his name is mentioned in conversation. Yet I have never been able to discover that any act of direct adoration is paid to him. The most peculiar feature in the creed of the Yezidees is the total absence of any ritual or prescribed mode of worship. Although I have remained among them for several days, I have never been able to detect anything like veneration for a superior power; except that, at Sheikh Adi, I have remarked that they paid a kind of adoration to the rising sun.

They speak with the utmost veneration of Christ, and seem even to expect His re-appearance upon earth. They also expressed great veneration for the Gospel, a copy of which I showed them at Sheikh Adi. Respecting the latter person, I could learn nothing very satisfactory, although I was profuse in my inquiries.

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They did not seem to know how long the Temple had been in the possession of their sect; and when it was asserted in their presence, that the building had formerly been a Christian monastery, they merely remarked that it might have been so. On my asking more particularly respecting the origin of their creed, they seemed, as far as I could understand, to indicate the East as the direction from which it had formerly been introduced.

Such appear to be the principal characteristics of this interesting, and much calumniated sect, characteristics which seem to point clearly to the source from whence their doctrines originally sprang. Let us now endeavour to ascertain whether we can establish the connexion, which appears at first sight so strikingly evident, between their tenet and those of Manes.

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CHAPTER XII.

Early spread of Christianity in Assyria and Persia. The Magians. Manes and his Institutions. Manichecism of the Yezidees. Rabban Hormuzd.

THE attention of the Apostles had been, at an early period, directed to the land of Naharaim and the parts adjacent. Among the converts at the day of Pentecost, we read of the dwellers in Mesopotamia, of Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; many of whom probably carried back with them the seeds of truth, and laboured in scattering them among their idolatrous countrymen. The strong similarity which existed between the manners, customs, and language of the Eastern and Western Syrians probably tended to facilitate the extension of the Gospel, so that it is not surprising, if before the middle of the second century, we find the Christian religion pervading the

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regions of ancient Assyria, and possessing a considerable number of adherents even in Persia itself.

Three hundred years after the birth of Our Lord, his divine religion had effected great conquests, and the metropolitan of Seleucia, the modern Babylon, might almost with justice lay claim to the lofty title of Patriarch of the East. But Christianity had to struggle in Persia with an antagonist more subtle and more dangerous than the effete and worn-out systems of idolatry, which in the west, yielded to it almost without a struggle. The legends of the Greek mythology required and obtained the assistance of the civil power to sustain their influence, and the rapidity with which the whole fabric of superstition crumbled and fell, after that assistance had been withdrawn, proved at once its inherent weakness, and incapability of maintaining its ground alone. But the theology of the Magi was of a widely different character. Free from much of the puerility and open folly of the Grecian system, it gave less offence to the reasoning and philosophical mind by its ceremonial observances, while an attentive regard for the duties of morality, and a freedom from the licentious practices enjoined by the rituals of other superstitions, tended to secure to its priesthood a large amount of authority and popular veneration.

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Nor must we forget that the Magian system professed to solve a problem, which had long been the subject of anxious and earnest speculation. The mind that attempts, without the aid of revelation, to understand the constitution and course of mortal affairs, will find itself unable to account for the existence of evil in a world, where all things seem to bear the impress of goodness. The earth that nourishes, the beauties of nature that delight their beholders, form a strong and marked contrast to the sickness that wastes and destroys the human frame, and the storms which scatter ruin and devastation in their course. The evils brought upon mankind by poverty, rapine, and warfare, seem to indicate the active operation of an evil principle, endeavouring to disturb the placid serenity produced by plenty, quiet, and peace. The question, therefore, will necessarily arise, whence and of what nature is this influence, which seems to mar and disturb the happiness of creation? How is it possible that a beneficent Being like the Creator of the universe, can be at once the author of evil, and the producer of good; the parent of two principles which must be ever in active antagonism, and mutually counteract, and therefore nullify each other?

The Magian philosophy attempted to answer and to

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satisfy these queries, by referring the different effects of good and evil to the operation of two principles, equal in power and authority, and continually in conflict; nor can it be doubted that a theory could not be wanting in subtlety and apparent truth, which, under the name of Manicheeism, prevailed so extensively in Western Asia and in Europe, and possessed sufficient attractions for the clear and logical mind of St. Augustine.

Such was the opinion which, in the third century, contested with Christianity the empire of the extreme East, attracting reverence from its antiquity, and attention from the speciousness of its doctrines. The Magi found themselves, however, losing their hold on the minds of their votaries; the doctrine of the two principles, with its hopeless fatalism, yielded before the bright vision of good triumphing finally over evil, and of man reconciled to God by the sufferings of incarnate Deity. Despite the persecution with which the Magi assailed the new opinions, their adherents increased, and in Persia, as elsewhere, the blood of martyrs proved eventually the seed of the church.

While matters were in this state, a young Magian, named Manes, conceived the idea of reconciling and uniting in one, the teaching of the Magi, and the doctrines of Christ. Nor did the attempt seem alto-

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gether hopeless; the Jehovah of the Gospel might be easily made to represent the Yezd, the good principle of the Persian mythology, while the Satan of the Christian system became identical with the Ahriman, or evil principle. A substitute for the Redeemer was found in the Persian Mithras, who was supposed to represent to mankind the brightness of eternal light.

In order to recommend himself more strongly to the Christians, whose system he appears to have carefully studied, the audacious impostor had the effrontery to represent himself as the Paraclete promised by Christ to his disciples, who should lead them into all truth. This expression was perverted, by Manes, to signify that the Christian system was not yet perfect, but was to expect its completion and final settlement at the coming of a Divine messenger, commissioned by God to explain more fully the way of life. The same pretensions were afterwards advanced by Mohammed, and admitted by his disciples as an authority for his mission.

As he proceeded in his attempt to reconcile the two systems, the Persian impostor found himself reduced to the necessity of casting discredit on nearly all the books of the Old and New Testaments, and of substituting in their place a fabrication of his own. He

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also affirmed that the evil principle was the God of the Jews, and had stirred up the chief priests to put Christ to death. He denied, however, that He really suffered crucifixion; a phantom was substituted in His place, and the Redeemer returned to his throne in the sun, having previously commissioned twelve Apostles to propagate His doctrine, announcing, at the same time, that they were to expect a fuller and more perfect revelation at the appearance of a mysterious messenger, termed the Paraclete.

The tenets of this new revelation seem to have been as follows. The empire of the universe is divided between two potentates, the rulers of light and darkness; the ruler of light is in himself supremely happy and benevolent, while the prince of darkness is unhappy, evil, and malignant. Both these have given existence at various times to numberless beings, resembling themselves in character and in disposition. The prince of darkness becoming aware of the existence of light in the universe, resolved to do his utmost to suppress it; to counteract his malicious designs, the ruler of light opposed an army commanded by the first man, which was partially unsuccessful, for the prince of darkness was enabled to seize on a considerable portion of the Divine light and to mingle it with the mass of corrupt matter;

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he, however, suffered afterwards a signal defeat from the armies of light, but they failed in recovering any portion of the element that had been captured.

The prince of darkness afterwards created the parents of the human race from this mingled mass, forming the bodies from corrupt matter, and the souls from those particles of Divine light which he had captured. The beneficence of the Good Principle, then formed the earth as an habitation for the newly created beings, that while dwelling upon it, the captive particles of light might be delivered from their corporeal prisons, and be restored to their former condition. In order to aid them in their struggles with corrupt and malignant matter, the Ruler of Light produced from his own essence, two beings entitled Christ and the Holy Ghost, the former of whom He dispatched on a mission to mankind, clothed with the shadowy form of a human body. The Prince of Darkness procured His seeming death, and having fulfilled His appointed mission, He left the completion of the system revealed by Him, to the care of Manes the Persian—the promised Paraclete.

The substance of the new doctrine appears to have been, that the body, being composed of corrupt matter, is naturally evil, and attempts to defeat the

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aspirations of its celestial prisoner the soul. Sin, therefore, is nothing more than the obeying the inclinations of the body, which ought to be mortified and chastised by fasting and other acts of discipline, in order to diminish its influence, and restrain its importunities. Those, therefore, who by extravagant austerities succeed in vanquishing the frailties of their corporeal foe, shall depart after death to the moon, where they undergo a lustration by means of water, which purifies still more their nature, and renders them capable of essaying the last probation —that of fire, which will take place in the sun. Having passed successfully through these two stages of being, they enter the dwelling of Eternal Light, leaving their corrupt and evil bodies to return to their former state.

A more lengthened trial, however, awaits those who neglect to obey the injunctions of Christ as interpreted and explained by Manes. They must pass through the bodies of different animals, and undergo in those forms, the amount of pain and suffering that may be deemed necessary for their purification. When this is terminated, a fire shall burst forth and consume the earth, while the Prince of Darkness and his adherents will be delivered over to perpetual misery in the regions of eternal gloom, from which

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all egress shall be barred by an army of the delivered souls, who will also prevent all farther invasions of the realms of light.*

These opinions were entrusted for propagation to the zeal of several grades of ministers, answering in degree to the orders of the church. A president, who was said to represent Jesus Christ, exercised patriarchal authority over twelve Apostles or Metropolitans, who, in their turn, directed the operations of seventy-two bishops, and an unlimited number of priests and deacons.

The weakness, or the good sense, of some of his followers, obliged the Persian Paraclete to divide his adherents into two classes, one of which devoted themselves exclusively to the sublimer austerities, while their more humble brethren contented themselves with the less ostentatious virtues of sobriety and temperance. The latter were even permitted to taste the sweets of connubial affection, which the more rigid fanatics repelled as a sin.

The doctrines of Manes were too well adapted to the love of mystery, and appetite for austerities, which characterizes the Orientals, not to attract, in spite of

* This account of the system of Manes has been adopted from Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. Cent. iii., and Beausobre, Histoire du Manicheisme.

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their incoherence and absurdity, numerous adherents. The pernicious tenets overran Persia and Mesopotamia, and penetrated even to Europe, where they could scarcely be stifled by the iron hand of Rome. So late as the conclusion of the fifteenth century, they inhabited, in great numbers, the countries of Bosnia and Servia; and reckoned among their many and powerful protectors, the monarch of the former kingdom.*

If, therefore, we find, in a region adjacent to Persia, a sect resembling, in the main points of their faith, the followers of Manes, we have, to say the least, a strong presumption in favour of the opinion expressed a few pages back. The Yezidees, as Kurds, boast a Persian origin, and they inhabit the very spot where the dogmas of the Heresiarch were most popular in the third and fourth centuries. They have no altars, no images, no directly idolatrous worship, which might connect them with an older form of error. In their veneration for Christ, and in their attachment to his followers, they betray the signs of a system founded on corrupted Christianity; while their reverence for fire, light, and the evil principle, suggest points of resemblance to Manicheeism that should not be overlooked. Their bap-

* Mosheim, Cent. xv. chap. v.

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tism is the imitation of a Christian sacrament, while the practice of circumcision, although common, is never considered, to the best of my knowledge, as a religious act. Like the Druses of Mount Lebanon, they appear to have regarded it rather as a means of propitiating, or, perhaps, of deceiving, their Mohammedan tyrants.

It is not indeed to be imagined that the Yezidees have maintained untainted the system of Manes. In their veneration for the evil principle, they will seem to have exceeded the tenets propounded by him. But it is ever the tendency of error to corrupt itself, and to make its successive developments more evil still. It may be remarked also, that a savage and uncivilized people are more prone to be influenced by the striking and terrific features of a religious creed, than by its milder lessons and representations. The deity of a barbarous race is generally a celestial warrior; who must be propitiated with human sacrifices, and libations of blood. The same predominance of the wild and terrible, over the gentler influences of religion, may be traced in some of the wild legends of the middle ages, where the enemy of man plays so striking a part. It will scarcely surprise us, therefore, if the terror inspired by the Evil Principle should, among a rude, uncivilized, and

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illiterate race, be productive in time, of a species of veneration, which the mild and beneficent character of the Author of Good had failed in inspiring.

The title of Yezidee, signifying a follower or worshipper of Yezd, the Good Principle, seems to assign to the people who bear it, some affinity with the ancient Persians in creed, as well as in race. The tradition of the Mohammedans, which traces the appellation to a wicked khalif of Damascus, may be regarded as an idle fable; but the knowledge that such a legend existed among their sworn enemies, may have suggested to a race, not very scrupulous in practising deception, the policy of changing it for a name derived from the province of Dasen, where great numbers of them were then resident. Farther inquiries into the habits and tenets of the Yezidees, may tend to show more points of resemblance between them and the earlier followers of the Persian heresiarch; and therefore I may be hardly justified in propounding at any length that as a theory, which may shortly be established as a fact. I, therefore, turn from the consideration of their doctrines, to make a few remarks on their principal shrine and hierarchy.

The temple of Sheikh Adi, is reported to have been formerly a Christian Monastery, dedicated probably

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to Adæus or Adai, the disciple of St. Thaddeus, and his coadjutor, in effecting the conversion of Mesopotamia. The veneration which the present Yezidees blindly pay him, is doubtless founded on a tradition dimmed and obscured by time, but derived originally from their Manicheean or Christian ancestors. The inscriptions contained in the temple, are quite modern, nor is it certain, that the present holders have possessed it for any length of time. Yet that their veneration for Sheikh Adi, is evidently a vital part of their creed, is testified by their annual pilgrimage to his tomb. Nor should it be forgotten, that while the sepulchres of St. Thomas and St. Thaddeus have been pointed out, the last resting place of the Apostle of Mesopotamia, has hitherto remained unknown.

The Priesthood of the Yezidees comprises three, or at most four orders of ministers. The head Sheikh who presides over the whole body, the Peers who occupy the second rank, the Kawals and the Fakeers, or Guardians of the Tomb. In the Manicheean hierarchy, we find one more grade, that of the twelve, who were supposed to represent the Apostles of Christ. But it may be doubted, whether this was intended to be of permanent duration. Its functions may have ceased when the Manicheeans

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suspended their more active missionary exertions.

Omitting this second rank or grade, we find four orders in each sect, of which the head Sheikh of the Yezidees will correspond to the President or Patriarch of the Manichees, while the Peers, Kawals, and Fakeers, accord with the bishops, priests, and deacons of the Persian heretics. The resemblance might be more fully established, if we knew the names given by the Manichees to these grades of their hierarchy. But the information we possess concerning Manes and his system, comes through the medium of Christian writers, who, finding a similarity existing between the grades of the Manichee priesthood, and those of the church, accommodated the names used among themselves to express the different orders of the former.

I have thus endeavoured to point out a few features of resemblance between the followers of Manes and the votaries of Sheikh Adi. Whether what has been said will satisfy others I know not, but after a most careful consideration of the state of the case, I cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that the Yezidees are the only surviving representatives of that widely extended heresy which proved in early days the most active and dangerous opponent of

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Eastern Christianity. The open-hearted hospitality, the kindness and good humour of these poor persecuted people, must excite a wish in the mind of the benevolent and Christian traveller, that the lessons of a purer creed might dispel their superstitions, and imbue them with a clear and perfect knowledge of our divine religion.

It is greatly to be lamented that some protection from the persecutions of their Kurdish and Turkish enemies, cannot be obtained for the unfortunate Yezidees. The hatred of the Mohammedans has ranked them far below the Jews in their charitable estimate of those who differ from themselves, and the option of the Koran or the sword, which the latter may turn aside by the offer of tribute, remains in full force for the unhappy Yezidee.

"They are cursed dogs, who have no revelation nor even a prophet," said a Moslem to me one day when speaking of the Yezidees; "why should you lament over their fate? For myself, the killing of them would be as the killing of a wild beast."

It must, however, in candour be acknowledged that the Yezidees have not learnt mercy by persecution, but have treated with wanton cruelty those of the Moslems who have fallen into their hands. They have invariably spared the Christians, and when the

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masacre of the Nestorians drove many hundreds of unhappy fugitives to Mosul, they received shelter and protection at the tomb of Sheikh Adi.

Early in the morning I bade adieu to the delightful valley and its kind inhabitants, and ascended the mountains in a northerly direction. My road was steep, but surrounded with plantations of oak, whose verdant foliage reminded me of scenes far away. I was quietly musing on the Yezidees and their history, when my mule made a false step, and I found myself suddenly rolling on the ground. Fortunately we had nearly reached the summit, and I was deposited on a heap of dry leaves, the accumulation of many weeks. The mention of this fall might sound somewhat strange to European readers if I did not explain its cause. I determined to eschew the use of a saddle on leaving Bagh Sheikha, and had latterly bestrode my coverlet only, which was balanced on the back of the mule by a pair of saddle-bags. On this easy and comfortable seat I had travelled for some miles, but the late catastrophe admonished me that some kind of girth was absolutely necessary for mountain roads. A piece of rope, which we had brought with us, answered the purpose tolerably well, and I reached the other side of the range without any further accidents.

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We were now again at the foot of the Gordyæan Mountains, riding along the edge of the plains of Nineveh, in the direction of the great Chaldean monastery of Rabban Hormuzd. As we proceeded, Toma pointed out the remains of seven or eight ruined villages, formerly inhabited by Yezidees. Where were their late occupants? Murdered or captives. Far away in exile they longed in vain, it may be, for a sight of those distant mountains which they were never again to behold, or pictured in the tablet of memory that fair and fertile valley, with its gently murmuring rivulet and its holy tomb.

At length we arrived at the entrance to the winding pass, within which stood the convent of Rabban Hormuzd. It terminated in a wide semicircular ravine, round which wound a steep and circuitous path. The rain had begun to fall heavily before we accomplished the half of the ascent, and a thick mist-like vapour filled the hollow formed by the semicircle of rocks. Blinded by these mists, we were obliged to remain stationary, as the mules seemed indecisive, and we could hardly discern our path. At length the deep tone of the summons to prayers sounded from the convent, the mules pricked up their ears and moved forward, while the mist suddenly disappeared, and soon, as if a veil or cur-

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tain had been gradually withdrawn, we discovered the form of the monastery before us, and perceived a body of monks, who were issuing forth from the great gate to meet and welcome us. The good fathers were well acquainted with Toma, and in a few minutes I was occupying a comfortable cave, within whose rocky walls the early Christian converts had often, it is said, found a refuge from their Pagan and Magian persecutors.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Rabban Hormuzd. Ecclesiastical Customs of the Chaldeans. Language. Extracts from the Liturgy of the Nestorians. Images. Excommunication.

THE Chaldean monastery of Rabban or Saint Hormuzd occupies a rocky ledge or platform, on the side of one of the mountains of the Judi range. It is surrounded on all sides by lofty eminences, and looks over the semicircular recess which I have alluded to in the last chapter. The buildings connected with the establishment are arranged in no regular order, so that much of the effect which might be produced by a skilful and judicious grouping of the different edifices has been neglected. Still there remains enough to make the view of the convent and its offices an agreeable and striking prospect, when contemplated from the entrance of the

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ravine. The church and the adjacent buildings seem as it were to spring out of the barren side of the mountain, their white walls contrasting vividly with the dark ground behind. Above, appear the signs of cultivation in the shape of several vine plantations, which are tended by the lay brethren. A narrow and circuitous path gives access to them, and conducts the inquisitive traveller in a short time to the summit of the mountain.

Kas Emmanuel, the Abbot, was absent from Rabban Hormuzd at the time of my visit, but I received a most hospitable welcome from Brother Antonius, the Sub-Prior. He was a small spare man, on whose saturnine features, mortification, or disgust with the world, had left the traces of melancholy and rigid self-denial. In the east as in the west, disappointment and misfortunes drive many to the cloister, to brood in solitude and silence over sorrows, the recollection of which can rarely be effaced.

Many of the cells of the monks are simply caves hewn in the sides of the mountain, on which their monastery is built. One of these was allotted to me, and I liked it so well, that when on a subsequent visit, the worthy Abbot would have offered me an apartment in his own house, I declined the honour, and begged to be conducted again to my old lodging.

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The kindness of my monastic friends showed itself in various little acts of courtesy. One spread my carpet, and brought me a comfortable pillow to recline against, another filled and arranged my pipe from his own tobacco-pouch, while a third, a lay-brother, assisted my servant in kindling a fire. As it was Lent, the monks were unprovided with meat, but I received with much thankfulness a bowl of red lentiles, made into pottage, and called Ades. This is evidently the same with the Adesh of Scripture, the word used in the original Hebrew, to signify the red pottage, for which Esau sold his birthright to his brother Jacob*. The Ades in question was savoury in the extreme, and its odour very tempting to a hungry man. Its taste resembled exceedingly that well known luxury of sailors pea-soup.

A short time before my visit, the monastery had been attacked by the Kurdish soldiers of Ismail Pasha, of Amadiyeh; who in wanton barbarity tore up all the manuscripts, which they could find, for cartridges, used the altars as targets, and committed various acts of shameful indecency in the church. The monks were seized and several of their number severely beaten. One was suffering still, at the period of my visit, from the tortures which had been inflicted on

* Gen. xxv.

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him. The Kurds tried to burn the church, but their attempt was frustrated, and after a stay of some days they and their valiant commander who had treated with such unprovoked and unmanly cruelty, a few aged and helpless men, thought proper to retreat laden with booty to their mountain fortress. The outrage was passed over unpunished, for Mohammed Pasha of Mosul, was not inclined to make a formal rupture with the Kurds, for the sake of a few Christian monks.

The revenues of the monastery are supplied from the produce of the vineyards and other lands in the vicinity, as well as from the offerings and donations of the surrounding villages, whose churches are served by priests from Rabban Hormuzd. The monastic clergy, therefore, do not always remain in the convent, but each in his turn resides for some time at any particular village which is indicated by the superior. In like manner, some of our old monasteries in former times engrossed to themselves the patronage of many parishes, and were responsible for the due performance of divine service.

Before a portion of the Nestorian community placed themselves under a Patriarch nominated by the Pope, and arrogated to their new sect the distinctive title of the Chaldean church, the monks of

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Rabban Hormuzd had been the most formidable opponents to Roman usurpation. Private and personal feelings may have borne their share in the active resistance which they offered, for an alteration, or, as they termed it, a reform of the monastic system, had been one of the first steps contemplated by the Italian Missionaries. The monks of the older Nestorians like those of the primitive church, were not required to take a vow of perpetual celibacy. * Men who from motives of piety or convenience had entered a monastery, were allowed to quit it, to return to the world, and even to take upon themselves connubial ties when they found that their inclinations tended that way; like the English fellows of Colleges, the early Nestorian Monks, devoted themselves to the work of education, and the cities of Mosul, Nisibis and Arbela, were deservedly famed for the number of learned doctors, and zealous missionaries who had issued from the learned shades of their monasteries. The indignant Assemani can scarcely stifle his wrath while he records such deviations from the Monachism, sanctioned by his church; and though he enumerates their acts of usefulness, and cultivation of learning, refuses the title of real and true monks to such erring ecclesiastics. Of late years, however,

* Assemani de Syris Nestorianis.

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the opposition offered by the former inhabitants of Rabban Hormuzd to the sway of the Pope has been succeeded by passive submission to his authority, and that of the Italian Missionaries. The monks are now faithful and obedient defenders of the rights of Rome.

I went to visit the church, which being a mere modern building, possesses little to interest, or to describe. The altars were placed Roman-wise against the wall, and a profusion of pictures and images showed proofs of the departure of the modern Chaldeans from the rigid tenets of their fathers. A sarcophagus of marble in a small chapel attached to the church is pointed out as the resting place of Rabban Hormuzd. The pages of Assemani mention two Persians of that name, one the companion and disciple of Nestorius; and the other a Persian Abbot and Martyr, who flourished before his time. The inmate of the tomb is said to have been the latter, who, flying with his sister from the persecution of Sapor, dwelt for many years in a cave near the spot where he now lies buried, and occupied himself in preaching the faith to the rude and idolatrous inhabitants of the Gordyæan mountains. His exertions proved so far successful as to excite the rage of the bigoted priests who stirred up the mul-

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titude to seize the holy recluse, and put him to a painful and lingering death.

On leaving the church I returned to my own apartment, which contained, among other things, a rude altar cut in the rock, where service was performed on certain days in the year. It is said that this cave was in early times the receptacle of the neighbouring Christians, who fled thither for a refuge from their Pagan persecutors, and performed in darkness and solitude their sacred rites. As the shades of evening drew on, the solitary lamp which hung suspended from the rocky ceiling cast a sad and melancholy light on the rude altar, and the crosses, with other mystical emblems, which pious hands had graven in the hard rock. It was both a scene and a time calculated to produce meditation and solemn feelings, and rarely since, have I felt so vividly the luxury of solitude and its sacred inspirations.

In the morning I visited the library, which was also a cave in the vicinity of my own habitation. The floor was strewn with the torn fragments of manuscripts, and the half burned covers, which had resisted partially the ravages of the destroyer. I am not naturally vindictive, but the sight of this wanton and profitless outrage made me anything but charit-

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ably disposed towards its perpetrators. One might excuse the pillages of savage marauders who, from their cradle, had been accustomed to look upon theft as a virtue; but the destruction of that which might have enlightened and benefited thousands, to satisfy a savage bigotry and unprovoked hatred of Christians, can find no palliation or defence.

The monks were busily engaged in copying such of the fragments as were legible, on paper prepared in a peculiar manner, and resembling parchment in its appearance. The ink which they used was remarkable for its fine glossy colour, which promised well for durability. They wrote with reeds, and, dispensing with a table or desk, rested the paper on the knee.

The Chaldean character is difficult to form, and renders the movements of the transcriber necessarily slow. It is an alteration or adaptation of the old Estrangelo or Ancient Syriac letters, but differs little from its original. It is said that formerly the Eastern and Western Syrians used the same forms, but that the present mode of writing the Chaldean was introduced by Joseph Huzita, who succeeded Narses in the school of Nisibis.*

The radical structure of the Chaldean differs so

* Gregory Bar Hebræus as cited by Assemani de Syris Nestorianis.

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slightly from the Aramaic or Western Syriac, that they may be considered almost as one language. Yet there exists a marked distinction in the pronunciation of the two. The vowel point, zakopho, which the Westerns sound like *o*, the Chaldeans enunciate as a broad *a*. Thus, the words rendered by the Syrians *Eloho Bro* and *Nuro*, are sounded by the Chaldeans *Eloha Bra* and *Nura*, a difference sufficiently remarkable to cause some confusion in a conversation carried on between those who follow the different modes of pronunciation. This dissimilarity between two dialects which have evidently the same origin, seems to have been of early date. In Ezra iv. 7, we find a passage, the mysterious wording of which appears to require the admission of this difference to interpret it aright. It is said that, "in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes, King of Persia, and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue and interpreted in the Syrian tongue."

The apparent tautology of the above is explained by the supposition that the characters of the epistle were those common to Eastern and Western Syria, while the words were read before the King, and explained to him according to the pronunciation of the

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Assyrians and Chaldeans, who both seem to have used one language similar in substance to that employed in the offices of the Chaldean Church, and entitled the Chaldee or Chaldaic.

Besides the pure and elegant idiom in which the services and theological treatises of the Chaldeans are written, there is a kind of vulgar *patois* spoken by the Christian villagers around Mosul, and by the Nestorians of the Tiyari mountains. It is called *Fellahi*, or the labourer's dialect, and bears the same relation to the ancient language that the modern Romaic does to the Hellenic. Among themselves, the Christians of the plains constantly use this jargon in preference to Arabic, which they consider of infidel origin; and the ordinary Nestorians know no other medium of communication, except when they have dealings with the Kurds, at which times the necessary conversation is carried on in Kurdish. I have been told in Mosul that the dialect of the mountain Nestorians approaches nearer to the written language, and is of a more grammatical and elevated character than that spoken by the Chaldeans of the plains. The Ecclesiastics use both the literary and colloquial dialects in conversation, though some of them are not very well acquainted with the former.

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During my residence in the monastery, I frequently attended the services performed by the monks, and gained from them much information respecting the forms and ceremonies of the Chaldean Church. Their chants, though generally harsh and unmusical to an European ear, sometimes exhibited tones of a plaintive and mournful character that were not unpleasing. Unlike the generality of Eastern singers, who seem unaccountably to confound shouting with devotion, the recitative of the monks of Rabban Hormuzd was of a more quiet and dignified kind.

I am no admirer in general of the doings of the Church of Rome in these parts, but I cannot in candour refuse to the Italian instructors of the Chaldeans, the praise of having introduced some beneficial improvements. The interior of the church was neat and clean, unlike the generality of Oriental temples, where the dirt and odour would be insupportable were not the latter dispelled in some measure by the constant use of incense. In the church of Rabban Hormuzd, the operation of Western taste was seen in the absence of the tawdry finery and puerile decorations which disfigure most of the Eastern houses of prayer. It would have been better, perhaps, if this taste had suggested also the

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removal of sundry wax-dolls, intended to represent the Blessed Virgin and other saints, but which tended, in my judgment at least, to degrade and debase a sacred edifice to the level of a baby-house.

The Chaldean Church has always regarded with peculiar veneration the rite of ordination, which, by many writers, has even been described as a sacrament. Ebedjesus of Soba, in his Nomo-canon, after enumerating the three grades of bishop, priest, and deacon, proceeds to subdivide each, and to distinguish them as follows:—The first grade embraces the simple bishop, whose labours are restricted to the care of a single diocese; the Metropolitan, who rules over a certain number of bishops; and the Catholicos or Patriarch, who was looked up to as the visible head of the whole Church. Under the priestly grade are ranked the simple Presbyter, the Periodeuta, whose functions resembled those of the ancient Chorepiscopos; and the Archdeacon, whose rank and duties correspond with those of a similar dignitary in our own Church. The third and lowest order embraced the deacons, whose office it is to read the Gospel, to minister the cup, and to assist the priest in the celebration of the Eucharist; the Hypodiaconos, or subdeacon, and the reader, who recited or chanted the lessons in the daily service.

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The title of Patriarch was first assumed by the Catholicos of the Nestorians, when the latter withdrew themselves from the jurisdiction of Antioch, after the council of Ephesus, held in A.D. 431.

Many alterations and omissions have taken place in the Nestorian or Chaldean Hierarchy, since the days of the writer quoted above. The Romanist Chaldeans still retain, at present, the nine grades of ecclesiastics; although, in some places, a slight change has been introduced by the Italian missionaries. Among the Independent Nestorians, however, one sole bishop and the patriarch are the only representatives in the Tiyary of the Episcopal order. While he resided at Mosul, Mar Shimon frequently expressed his sorrow at this fact, and also his determination to consecrate three other bishops as soon as the troubles brought upon him by the Kurdish invasion were at an end.

In former days, all the Nestorian ecclesiastics, including even the bishops and the catholicos, were allowed to marry; nor was it considered necessary, as in other Oriental churches, to refuse orders to a person who had been united to two wives in succession.* A somewhat curiously worded canon prescribes the number of times that a priest or deacon

* Assemani de Syris Nestorianis.

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may enter into the married state, and fixes the *ultimatum* at seven and a half, with an explanatory remark that the half wife is to be considered as referring to a widow, while the other seven are to be virgins.* By the Levitical law, on which most of the early canons were founded, it is commanded that a priest shall marry a virgin only, and the same injunction strictly forbids him to contract any alliance with a widow or divorced woman.† The above rule, however, seems to consider the marriage of an ecclesiastic with a widow as lawful, though, from the circumstances under which it was allowed, such a union could seldom take place. The Patriarch Marabas was the first who introduced a law that the bishops and catholicos should remain single, yet the marriage of the clergy is acknowledged by Assemani to have been a custom transmitted from the earliest prelates of the Nestorian Church.‡

The Sacrament of Baptism should, according to the ritual, be preceded by the anointing of the neophyte, and his solemn reception by the Church as a catechumen. In the Baptism of Children, however, the introductory ceremonies are omitted, and the child

* Assemani de Syris Nestorianis.

† Lev. xxi. 13, 14.

‡ Assemani de Syris Nestorianis.

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is at once immersed three times, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The godfather then stands before the entrance to the sanctuary with the infant in his arms, while the priest anoints the forehead with consecrated oil, making upon it the sign of the cross. A white garment is thrown over the newly baptized, and a drop of consecrated wine is given to it from the chalice, a remnant, doubtless, of the old practice of administering the Eucharist to children. The anointing after Baptism is considered equivalent to our rite of Confirmation, and may be performed by a priest, though the oil itself must be consecrated by a Bishop. Some of the earlier Nestorians are said to have joined the rite of Circumcision to the Christian Sacrament of Baptism.*

Several of the early Nestorian writers mention an ingredient which they term the leaven of the holy oil and of the Eucharist, the history of which is thus related by two writers cited in Assemani:—

When our Lord Jesus was baptized in Jordan by St. John the Baptist, the latter received the waters flowing from his sacred body in a vessel, which he carefully preserved till the day of his martyrdom, when he gave it over to the keeping of his disciple,

* Assemani de Syris Nestorianis.

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St. John the Evangelist. At the Last Supper our Lord presented a double portion of bread to the latter Apostle, who carefully put by a part of it and laid it up together with the vessel of water. During the crucifixion, St. John sedulously collected the drops of blood which flowed from the pierced side of the Redeemer, and mingled them with the water and the bread.

This mixture or leaven was afterwards divided by the Apostles among themselves, and was delivered by St. Thomas to Adæus, the Apostle of Mesopotamia and Assyria, from whom it has descended to the Patriarchs of Seleucia, the Pontiffs of the Nestorians. It is but fair to observe that the above legend seems to have been received by a few writers only, and does not appear to be generally credited now.

The bread intended for the Holy Communion, which the Nestorians, in common with other Orientals, term the Consecration, and the Unbloody Sacrifice is ordered by the canons to be made and prepared within the precincts of the Church itself.

"Let the priest," says an old canon, "take to him fine flour, with salt, olive oil, and three drops of water, and let him mix it, using at the time certain appointed prayers. Let him do this on a table adorned or prepared for that purpose, and after the

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Gospel is read, let it be sprinkled with old leaven." This canon, according to Assemani, goes on to refer to the leaven handed down from Adæus, as mentioned in the legend quoted above, but I have omitted this part, because I neither saw nor heard any reference made to it during the making of the bread of which I was an eye witness at Mosul. In another place Assemani seems to speak of the legend as now obsolete, but the former part of the canon is to this day observed. The loaf thus prepared is placed upon the altar after the reading of the Gospel.

The majority of Nestorian writers acknowledge only three daily canonical hours of worship, founded as they say, on scriptural authority. The offering of the lambs every morning and evening, enjoined by the Levitical law, typifies the morning and evening hours of prayer, while the words of David, "At midnight I will rise to give thanks to thee,"* warrant the appointment of a night service. The later Nestorians, however, only observe, as far as the laity are concerned, the morning and evening hours. The clergy make it a rule at present to recite the Psalter twice a week, repeating fifty psalms at each nocturn or night office, and the days on which they usually assemble in church for this purpose are Mondays, Tuesdays,

* Psalm cix., 62.

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and Wednesdays. On the Saturday night, which they designate by the Jewish title of "the Preparation," they recite half the Psalter, and sometimes the whole on solemn occasions.

The Eucharist, or Liturgy, is always begun at daybreak. The priest puts on a kind of surplice, in which he recites the preparatory prayers; over this is thrown, at the commencement of the Anaphora or canon, a garment resembling nearly in shape the Roman chasuble, which should be richly embroidered, and marked with a cross at the back. The priest wears a thin strip of embroidered cloth round his neck, disposed like the black scarf worn in our church, but crossed over the breast instead of hanging down, and fastened at the waist with a girdle. The altar on which the elements are placed, can only be used once a-day, and must be furnished with a cross and two lights.

Having put on his vestments, the Liturgy begins with the anthem "Glory be to God in the Highest," followed by the Lord's Prayer. Various supplications succeed, after which, the priest kisses the book of the Gospels on the altar, and the deacons exclaim to the people "Bow down your heads." This is followed by other prayers, after which the priest and deacons mount the steps of the altar and arrange it

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for the reception and celebration of the sacred mysteries.

As so little is known respecting the service of the Nestorians, and their mode of conducting their worship, it may interest my readers to see a few extracts from the Liturgy most commonly used by them on Sundays and festival days, which is called the Liturgy of the Apostles; not from the twelve, but from Adæus and Mares, the disciples of St. Thomas, who first preached the doctrines of Christianity in Assyria. It is entitled "The Liturgy of the Blessed Apostles, composed by St. Adæus and St. Mares, the Doctors or Instructors of the Easterns;" and commences with the following rubric:—

The priest approaches to celebrate, and bows himself thrice before the altar, the middle part of which he kisses first, then the right and left extremities, and inclines himself towards the upper part. Afterwards he shall say:*

Bless O Lord. Pray for me my lords, fathers, and brethren, that God may give me power and ability to perform in a suitable manner this ministry,

* At the back of every Oriental altar appears a raised ledge, on which are placed the candles and cross. It is called the Thronos, or throne, and seems to be the same designated in the above Rubric as the upper part.

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to which I have approached and have entered upon, and that He may receive this oblation at the hands of my unworthiness (which is offered) for me, for you, and for the whole body of the Holy Catholic Church, according to His grace and compassion. Amen.

The people shall answer. May Christ hear thy prayers, and graciously accept thy sacrifice, and receive thy oblation, honouring thy priesthood, and may He grant to us through thy mediation, the pardon of our faults, and the remission of our sins, through His infinite grace and compassion.

Then the priest shall bow himself towards the lower part of the altar and shall say:

May God, the Lord of all, be with each of us according to His infinite grace and mercy. Amen.

Bowing to the deacon, who stands at his left hand, he shall say:

May God the Lord of all confirm thy words, and grant to thee peace, and receive this oblation from my hands for me, and for thee, and for the whole body of the holy Catholic church, and for the whole world, through His infinite grace and compassion, Amen.

After some prayers said secretly and in an inaudible tone by the priest, the deacon says:

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Be watchful and attentive. (*The priest then rises and uncovers the elements, taking off the veil with which they were covered. He blesses the incense, and says with a loud voice.*)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us all now and for ever.

The people answer. Amen.

Priest. Let your minds be lifted up.

People. They are lifted up to thee O God of Abraham, and Isaac, and the glorious King of Israel.

Priest. Let an oblation be offered to God the Lord of all.

People. It is worthy and right.

Deacon. Peace be with us.

Priest. The adorable and glorious Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which created the world through His grace, and its inhabitants through His clemency, which hath saved mankind through His mercy, and hath shown great grace to mortals, is worthy of glory from every mouth,—of confession from every tongue,—and of exaltation by all creatures. Thousands of thousands of the celestial ones bless and adore thy Majesty O Lord; and tens of thousands of myriads of holy Angels, the armies of the spiritual world, with the holy cherubim and the

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spiritual seraphim, sanctify and celebrate thy name, continually proclaiming and praising thee, and with never ceasing voice exclaiming one to the other.

People with a loud voice. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, heaven and earth are full of His glory.

The priest in a low tone. O Lord and mighty God, receive this oblation which we offer to thee for the whole of the Holy Catholic Church, and for all our pious and righteous Fathers who have pleased thee, for all Prophets and Apostles, for all Martyrs and Confessors, for all that mourn, for the sick and the afflicted, for those who suffer any need or vexation, for all the weak and oppressed, for all the departed, who, being separated from us, have journeyed hence to another region, as well as for all who have requested the prayers of our infirmity, and for me a humble and powerless sinner. O Lord our God, according to thy compassion and the multitude of thy grace, look upon thy people, and upon me a weak one, not according to my sins and my follies, but (grant) that all may be worthy to obtain the remission of sins through this Holy Body, which they receive with Faith by the grace of thy mercy. Amen.

Then the priest shall say this prayer secretly. But

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thou O Lord for the sake of thy many and unspeakable mercies, remember for good all those of our fathers who were pious and just, and who pleased thee in the commemoration of the body and blood of thy Christ, which we offer on thy pure and holy altar even as thou hast taught us, and grant us thy peace all the days of this life.

He continues. O Lord our God grant us thy peace and tranquillity all the days of this life, that all the dwellers upon earth may know thee: for Thou art God alone, even the true Father, and thou hast sent our Lord Jesus Christ thy son and thy beloved one, and He, our Lord and God, came and taught us all purity and holiness. Remember the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Bishops, Doctors, priests, deacons, and all the children of the Holy Catholic Church, who have been signed with the sign of life even Holy Baptism. We also, thy humble, weak, and ignorant servants, who have met together in thy name, now stand before thee, and receive with joy the form which is from thee, praising, glorifying, and exalting thee. We commemorate and celebrate this great and tremendous, holy and divine mystery of the passion, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

O Lord, may thy Holy Spirit come and rest upon

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this oblation which thy servants have offered, to bless and sanctify it, that it may be to us O Lord for a propitiation of our faults, and for the remission of our sins, and (may it produce) a strong hope for the resurrection of the dead, and a new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have been well pleasing in thy sight: we, therefore, will ever praise and glorify thee in thy church, redeemed by the precious blood of thy Christ, on account of thy universal and wonderful dealings with us, with open mouths and a joyful countenance, offering thee a hymn of praise, and giving honour and adoration to thy holy, living, and vivifying name, now and for ever.

The priest signs the mysteries with the cross, and the people answer Amen.

The priest bows himself, and kisses the altar, first in the middle, then at the two sides, and says the following prayer:

O Christ, the peace of the Upper and the great tranquillity of the Lower ones, grant that thy peace and tranquillity may dwell in the four parts of the world, but chiefly in the holy Catholic Church. Grant that the Priesthood and the Government may have peace. Make wars to cease in all the corners of the earth, and scatter the people who delight in war, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life, in

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all temperance and in the fear of God. Have mercy on the sins and transgressions of the departed, for the sake of thy mercy and tender compassion.

Then shall he say to those who are about the altar: Bless the Lord: bless the Lord.

And he shall put on incense, with which he shall perfume himself, and shall say: O, Lord our God, make pleasing the odour of our souls, through the suavity of thy love, and by it cleanse me from the defilements of sin, and pardon my faults and transgressions, both those which I know and those which I know not.

He again takes the incense vessel in both hands, and incensing the mysteries (elements) he says:

May the clemency of thy grace, O, Lord our God, grant us access to these fair, holy, vivifying, and divine mysteries, unworthy as we are to partake of them.

The Priest repeats these words once and again, and during each interval joins his hands upon his breast in the form of a cross. He then kisses the altar in the midst, and taking in both hands the oblation, he lifts it up and says:

Praise be to thy holy name, O, Lord Jesus Christ, and let thy Majesty be adored for ever and ever. Amen. For He is the living bread and the life-giving

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One who descended from heaven, and giveth life to the whole world; and those who eat Him shall not die, and those who receive Him shall be saved through Him, nor shall they feel corruption, but shall live by Him through all eternity. For Thou art the antidote of our mortality, and the resurrection of our clay.

Breaking the bread with both hands he shall say: We approach, O, Lord, with true faith, and we break with giving of thanks, and we sign through thy mercy the body and blood of our life-giver Jesus Christ. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

And while he is naming the Trinity he breaks the bread, which he holds in his hands, and separating it into two parts, he places the piece in his left hand on the paten, and signing the cup with the portion held in the right hand he says:

The precious blood is signed with the holy body of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The people answer, Amen.*

After the Consecration has taken place, a priest and deacon take up their stations at the entrance of

* The original of the above Liturgy may be found in Renaudot's Collection of Eastern Liturgies.

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the Sanctuary, the former holding the paten with the consecrated bread, while the latter takes the cup or chalice. After the clergy have communicated, the people approach one by one, the men preceding the women. A vessel filled with incense is placed near the door of the sanctuary, and as the people walk by it they each pass their hands through the smoke, a kind of symbolical purification for the solemn act which they are about to perform.

The bread is received in the palm of the right hand, placed crosswise over the left, and the cup never leaves the hands of the deacon, who holds it to the lips of each communicant, wiping his mouth afterwards with an embroidered cloth. It is customary to administer the Eucharist to children, several of whom I observed among the communicants at Mosul.

The rites of the Romish Chaldeans differ little externally from those of their independent brethren. By both, Divine Service is solemnized in the ancient Chaldean language, but the Roman missionaries have inserted into the Missal used by the former several lines favourable to the doctrine of Transubstantiation,* and have introduced the custom of paying

* Leontius Byzantinus apud Assemani accuses the early Nestorians

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adoration to the consecrated bread. In all other particulars the service remains the same, and many of the Tiyari Nestorians who had been induced to attend the worship of the Romish Chaldeans, found scarcely any difference between it and their own. They, however, objected strongly to the pictures and images which, by degrees, had crept into the churches of Mosul and the neighbouring villages.

Auricular confession is practised among the Romish Chaldeans, but is considered unnecessary by the Nestorians. Yet Ebedjesus, one of their earliest writers, teaches that the penitent should go to the priest's house, and there make a special confession of his sins in order to obtain absolution, citing in proof the text, "Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."* According to Assemani, John Sulaka, who was the first patriarch of the Romish Chaldeans, accused Simon Barmama of having abolished this practice in the Nestorian Church.† Some time after, Joseph II. reproached the Independent Nestorians with their neglect of this rite.

of teaching that the bread and wine were merely types of the body and blood of Christ.

* St. John, xx. 23.

† Assemani de Syris Nestorianis.

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The aversion of the Tiyari people to the use of pictures is very strong, and they found it upon a literal interpretation of the second Commandment. One of them was much scandalized at finding a small print of the Queen hung up in my room at Mosul. It was in vain I observed that a private apartment was not a church, nor the portrait of an English Sovereign an object of worship. My Nestorian friend insisted, with some plausibility, that the Commandment prohibited the making of a graven image or the likeness of anything as well as the adoration of it, and seemed by no means satisfied with my excuses.

Excommunication is seldom resorted to among the Nestorians, though very much dreaded when put in force. The person denounced is deprived of civil as well as ecclesiastical privileges, and is considered as lying under the curse of God. Even his nearest relatives shun him, and will hold no communication with him. No one may buy or sell with the offender as long as he remains under the ban. In short, it is considered so fearful a doom that it is only inflicted for great and grievous offences. The Nestorian Patriarchs, indeed, seem to use their unlimited authority in a mild and paternal manner. The Chaldean Bishops of the plains, however, have made such

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frequent and unsparing application of the thunders of the Church, that their flocks begin to lose their respect for the once dreaded denunciations. Yet even in Mosul an excommunicated person is generally shunned and avoided.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Elkosh. Tomb of Nahum. A Chaldean's Account of the Reformation. American Traveller. Monastery of St. George. The Locusts. An Oriental View of Antiquities.

AFTER a stay of two days at Rabban Hormuzd, I took leave of the hospitable monks, and descended to the city of Elkosh, which is distant about two miles from the convent. It was formerly one of the most populous towns in these regions, but is now almost a heap of ruins. From its proximity to the mountains it has been particularly exposed to the ravages of the Kurds.

I felt much interested in this place from the fact that it contains the tomb of the Prophet Nahum, who is termed in Scripture the Elkoshite, and who prophesied, in such striking and terrific language, the

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downfall of the proud metropolis of the Assyrian kings. The prophet was probably one of the numerous captives carried away by Shalmanaser, who invaded and ravaged Palestine about B.C. 721. The allusions made in Nahum i. 4. seem to justify a belief that the seer was of mature age before he quitted the land of his fathers. If we follow the Scripture chronology, the prophecy of the fall of Nineveh was uttered about eight years after the date of the invasion, and the event must shortly have succeeded to the prediction. Nahum probably lived to witness with his own eyes the ruin of the "bloody city."

The tomb of the Prophet is within a mean edifice, consisting of two small chambers. It was covered with a piece of ragged and filthy green baize, on which was lying a manuscript roll, containing the Book of Nahum, in Hebrew. As I lifted it up to examine it more closely, a large beetle crept from beneath, and hurried across the baize at a rapid pace. The tomb is much respected by the Jews, who make annual pilgrimages to it; and it is also held in great esteem by the Christians.

The present city can scarcely contain buildings older than the time of the Mohammedan conquest, although if the assumption be correct that it was the residence of Nahum, its predecessor must have

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been coëval with Nineveh. It seems to have been the practice of the Arab invaders to restore or to retain the ancient appellations of cities, contrary to the practice of the Greeks, who were fond of inventing new names for the subjugated towns and districts. The Hellenic titles, however, had a less familiar sound to the ear of an Arab than the old Chaldean or Syrian appellations. The retention of the latter tends to make the identification of ancient and modern places more easy.

I lodged at Elkosh in the house of the head man of the Chaldean Christians, a silent and sententious individual, who spoke little and smoked much. However, I was not doomed to endure the burden of silence very long, for numbers of the Elkoshites, hearing that a Frank had arrived, came to smoke and talk in my room. Some of these were merchants, who were engaged in the gall nut trade, a production found in abundance among the neighbouring mountains. As my visitors were generally Christians, the conversation turned principally on theological matters.

They had, like the people of Bagh Sheika, a poor opinion of the English. I was often called upon to defend our nation from the charges of polygamy and Atheism. They were dreadfully scandalized at our

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refusing to acknowledge the authority of the Pope, and one gentleman asked me seriously, and with an air of great concern, whether I ever said my prayers! On one occasion a large party had assembled, among whom was a merchant recently arrived from Aleppo. In the course of conversation he began to attack the English.

"The Ingleez," he said, "are a very fierce and intractable nation. They marry many wives, and care very little about Allah, whose name be exalted."

I here interrupted the speaker, and asked if, in the course of his travels, he had ever heard of the English Church.

"Belli, yes," he answered, "I know the whole history of your Church. You must understand," continued he, turning to the rest, "that once there lived in England a great sultan whose name was Napoleon Buonaparte. This sultan was like unto Antar and Iskander, the Macedonian, and he made many of the kings of Frangistan his footstool. But his heart was lifted up, and he defied Allah in his pride. And Napoleon's wife was old, and she was no longer pleasing in his eyes. Then it came to pass that he looked upon a certain fair damsel with the glances of love, and he said, 'Inshallah, I will divorce my wife and get me this fair one in marriage.

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Now, the Ingleez were all Catholics then, and, therefore, Napoleon sent a message to our Father the Pope, desiring that he would grant him a divorce. But the Pope reproved Napoleon for his pride and unkind dealing with his wife, at which the Sultan waxed wrath, and said, Surely this Pope is no better than Abou Jahash, even the Father of Stupidity; but Inshallah, I will make him eat abomination. So he went with many soldiers and besieged Rome, and took the Pope prisoner, and shut him up in a great tower in London, which is the chief city of the Ingleez. But the kings of the Franks all joined together, and made war upon Napoleon Buonaparte, and overcame him. Then their soldiers came to London and set the Pope at liberty. And when the Pope returned to Rome, he cursed Napoleon, and excommunicated him and all the Ingleez. But Napoleon laughed at his beard, and he said, Inshallah, but I will have a Church of my own. So he made bishops, and they divorced his wife, and they married him to the beautiful damsel, after which he founded the English Church."

All the assembly were deeply penetrated and impressed with this narrative, which was delivered with great volubility and lively pantomimic action. I had but little chance of being attended to in my

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vindication of my country and its religion, for say what I would, the audience shook their heads doubtfully, and departed full of admiration at the wisdom of the Aleppo merchant, and regarding the English Church as the profane invention of that second Nimrod, Napoleon Buonaparte.

The Aleppo merchant had probably heard some mangled account of Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyn, while his lively imagination, or the suggestions of some Roman missionary, had supplied the rest. The reputation which Napoleon has acquired in the East would account for his being the hero of the story, more particularly as Orientals are not very exact in their notions of countries and dates. Even the chronology of their own land they know little about, and all time past is divided into two epochs, the period before Mahommed and that which has elapsed since.

Yet when I came to reflect upon the tale of the worthy Elkoshite, the feelings of contempt for his ignorance were checked by the recollection that few persons in England were much better acquainted with the East, its manners, religion, and history, than the Oriental was with the nature of the Reformation. How often since have I heard well informed persons enquire whether there were any

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Christians in the East, and express surprise on hearing of the Oriental Churches. The Nestorians have of late excited a little attention, but the great mass of sympathisers with them know nothing of their history, except that they are a sort of Asiatic Protestants, who read their Bibles and abominate the Pope.

Once, an American traveller was journeying to Aleppo in company with an active and intelligent Greek, whose services he had secured at Beyrout. One day, as they halted under some trees, and had spread their carpets for the night's repose, the traveller commenced a long discourse on the excellencies of the New Testament, which contained, he said, the life of Jesus Christ. The Greek listened for some time in astonishment as the loquacious native of the West detailed, with much self-satisfaction, the events of the Gospel narrative, but when the latter drew forth, with an air of importance, a small copy of the Testament and presented it to him as a book which he had never seen or heard of before, he lost all patience, and said, "Kyrie, my nation received that book from the hands of the Apostles themselves, and you are indebted to us for it. Have I heard of it say you? Why I know the greater part by heart, and I tell you candidly, Kyrie,

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that with us, as, perhaps, with you, the difficulty is not to know what the Gospel says, but to practise what it teaches."

I left Elkosh next day upon a most obstinate and perverse mule, who seemed most disinclined to carry peaceably a disciple of the wicked Napoleon Buonaparte. Once he slipped as we were ascending a steep hill, and laid me flat upon my back, which feat having accomplished to his satisfaction, doubtless, he stood contemplating me with an air that seemed to say, "It has served you right, you heretic." I mounted again, and was soon after deposited in a heap of soft mud, close to the door of a worthy Chaldean priest, who came forth, with many exclamations of surprise and sympathy, to rescue me from my uncomfortable couch. He had been educated at the Propaganda College, and spoke Italian fluently. Finding that my clothes still retained many traces of my two falls, he proposed that I should step into his house, and get myself dried and cleansed. I complied with this welcome invitation, and was soon seated at the good Presbyter's hospitable board, discussing some fried eggs and a bottle of village wine.

The deportment of my new friend displayed a polish and refinement which formed rather a pleasing

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contrast to the rude and coarse conduct of the savages of Elkosh, who, I believe, are noted for their *Kurdish manners*. He spoke of Rome with a feeling of regret, though he told me he never felt himself quite at home there. He disliked the Italian *cuisine* and the Frank dress, and complained that he could seldom enjoy the luxury of smoking. Some ecclesiastical business had led him as far as Paris, but his Eastern gravity did not accord with the gaiety of the French, whom he termed the Fathers of motion. Of the English he had heard but little, and that little was to their disadvantage. He considered them evidently as people without a faith, as the Mahommedans of the West.

The house of my worthy host was situated near a village called Tell Eskof, to the north of which he informed me was a larger town or village inhabited chiefly by Yezidees and called Haterah. The Syrian geographers, consider it to be identical with the Calah of Genesis. Eastward of Tell Eskof is another village called Kas-el-ain, or the head of the spring, from a small rivulet which takes its rise near it, and empties itself into the Tigris; to the north of the mound of Kuyunjik. Admitting the latter to have formed part of Nineveh, this stream probably flowed through the city. In Nahum ii. 6, there is an allu-

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sion to the gates of the rivers, which seems to indicate that besides the Tigris, there were other streams which either passed through Nineveh itself, or glided along at the foot of its walls.

From Tell Eskof, I rode on till we arrived at the ruined monastery of St. George, not far from the eastern bank of the Tigris. It had been for some months untenanted, save by a single monk, who received me at the gate, and recommended me to spread my carpet on the floor of a room adjoining the church. The latter contained little that was either interesting or curious. Over the altar was a grim portrait of St. George, slaying a ferocious dragon, that was breathing forth flames from mouth and nostrils, and emitting fountains of blood from various ghastly wounds, any one of which might have deprived an ordinary dragon of life.

The old monk was courteous and communicative. He showed me his books and his priestly garments, which were rather tarnished by frequent wear. At the west end of the church was a kind of gallery, fronting the altar, in which were two desks similar to those that in most Eastern Churches are placed in the choir. I asked the reason of this, but could get no satisfactory explanation of the seeming anomaly.

In the course of the afternoon, a Mohammedan

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from the neighbouring village came in, and seemed to be on very friendly terms with the monk. Both were loud in the praises of St. George, who was feared, they said, even by the Kurds, whom he had restrained on several occasions from burning the monastery. On the eve of his festival, the belligerent Saint crosses the Tigris from Mosul, in company with Khudder Elias, both mounted on white horses, and armed *cap à pie*. They scour the plain of Nineveh till daybreak, and woe to him who meets them in their nocturnal ride. I asked the Mohammedan some particulars respecting Khudder Elias, but he only knew that he was a great prophet, and was buried at Mosul. An Arabian geographer mentions that the tomb of the Prophet George stands in the midst of Mosul, and it is probable that he alludes to the great mosque, which the tradition of the inhabitants represent as having been formerly a Christian Church. It is likely that the old Nestorian cathedral of the modern Nineveh was dedicated to St. George, and hence the legends respecting him which are so plentiful in the vicinity.

During the evening three other Mohammedans came in, one of whom was the mollah of the village. They began to talk very loudly against the tyranny and oppression of Mohammed Pasha, who had lately

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imposed some rather heavy taxes on their village The following colloquy en ued between us.

Mollah.—"When are your people coming to take the country?"

Myself.—"I can hardly tell you, seeing that, to the best of my knowledge, they have no intention of doing anything of the kind. But tell me, O, Mollah, you who are a servant of the Prophet and a priest of his religion, why should you wish that the Franks and Christians might bear rule over you?"

Mollah.—"Khowajah,* God is great, and knows all things. If it be His will that we should become Christians, or that Islam should fall, He can bring it to pass, whether we desire the change or no. Why, then, should we be anxious for the future destiny of religion when the Exalted One takes care of it. We are blind and know nothing."

Another.—"I have heard say our mosques were once Christian churches, and, Allah knows, they may be so again. Anything, however, is better than the tyranny of this dog of a Pasha. May he sleep in Gehennam."

Mollah.—"Mohammed Pasha is, in one respect, a just man, he robs Jews, Christians, and Moslem alike. A year ago he sent for a student of my

* Sir.

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acquaintance, a humble and holy man. 'Oh, man,' said he, 'it grieves me to hear that you are behind with the salian.' 'I am poor, O, Pasha,' was the reply, 'and my patrimony is small. My crop, also, has not been prospered by Allah, and the Kurds have carried off several of my sheep.' The Pasha grew wrath like a Sheitan as he is, and interrupting the student he roared out, 'You dog, you unclean, pay you shall, or the bastinado shall compel you.' So the poor man returned home in great fear, and he had to sell his books to meet the demand. Shall such a Moslem as this go to Paradise? Shall he not rather be thrust down to the lowest pit of Gehennam, even below the accursed Jews?"

Myself.—"But the Cadi and Mufti of Mosul; surely they are, or ought to be, good Mussulmen, can they not help you, or moderate the tyranny of the Pasha?"

Mollah.—"Khowajah, the Pasha is a drunken infidel; and as for the Cadi and Mufti, they, excellent men, are worse than he!"

I was somewhat surprised to hear sentiments like these uttered by Mohammedans so near the residence of the dreaded Pasha. Bad as the Turks are, however, they have not imitated the evil example of certain more civilized and Christian Governments.

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The movements of the oppressed are at least free, nor are his words watched by some lurking spy and made a matter of accusation against him.

I remember on one occasion a butcher was condemned to have his ear nailed to his own door-post. The sentence was executed with small consideration for the feelings of the sufferer, who, however, indemnified himself by heaping a torrent of abuse on the Cadi, Mufti, and the Pasha himself. No notice was taken of what he said, but when the term of his sentence had expired, he was released, and allowed to depart unmolested. Perhaps, however, when the Turks become a little more civilized, they will adopt the system of espionage, with some other European improvements which they lack at present.

From the monastery we repaired the next morning to the bank of the Tigris, where we embarked in one of the clumsy ferry-boats, and after a passage which lasted a full hour at least, we arrived in safety at the Eastern entrance of Mosul. A peasant from one of the villages had preferred the ancient mode of transit. Inflating two bags of skin, which he carried in his hand, he supported himself upon them, and with his feet propelled himself across the river. Oppressed by the heat of the midday sun, and tired of

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the dilatory movement of the vessel, I almost envied him his cool and refreshing bath.

Soon after my return, I was standing on my terrace when my attention was attracted by what seemed to be a moving cloud. A dark compact body of insects came floating along from the west, while here and there a straggler lingered behind the others, and after vain attempts to join the main column, fell exhausted on the terrace before me. I took up one of these in my hand, and was soon watching, with mingled curiosity and compassion, the last moments of an expiring locust. Despite their destructive qualities, I could not help pitying the poor weary insect, who, after a flight of so many miles, was doomed to sink down with the land of plenty before his eyes. A few minutes longer and he would have been banquetting with his more fortunate brethren on the olive trees of Bagh Shiekha, or the corn fields of old Nineveh. I placed a drop or two of water in the palm of my hand, he seemed to drink eagerly of the refreshing element, but his brief span of life was closing, and I laid him down to die.

As the locusts proceeded, great numbers of them fell, and covered the terraces of the city in heaps. Their colour was a darkish yellow, and they were about an inch and a half in length. Their whole

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appearance resembled very much that of a grasshopper.

The last straggler had crossed the Tigris, and the people around all appeared on the neighbouring terraces furnished with large baskets, into which they threw whole heaps of the dead and dying insects. I was not sorry to get rid of them, on account of the stench which arose from their rapidly decaying bodies. The putrefaction of unburied locusts is said to have been the cause of plague in various parts of Asiatic Turkey. Their ravages are much dreaded, for they leave all the trees quite bare, stripping off even the hardest bark. I have heard that on some occasions they have entered houses in a body, and consumed everything that they could find.

My knowledge of Arabic was now progressing, and I was able to understand and converse with most of the numerous visitors who made calls upon me. Among those was an old Mohammedan merchant, whose quiet habits I liked, and whose visits were seldom protracted to any length of time. My friend Mohammed was a widower, and had two sons, very fine lads, whom he was proud of characterizing as two of the greatest sheitans in Mosul. The old gentleman loved stories to distraction, and often importuned me to relate what I had seen in my travels. He

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himself had smoked and dosed away fifty years in Mosul, during which time he had never been outside either of the gates. Sometimes two or three of his friends would accompany him. They were a silent race, devoted to their pipes and coffee, and knowing or caring little about anything exterior to their own little world

When I mentioned to Mohammed the excavations of Khoorsabad, he ruminated for a moment, and then asked me, in a confidential tone, how much gold the French Balios* had discovered. When I told him that M. Botta neither sought for nor expected anything more valuable than some ancient sculptures, my worthy old friend looked grievously disappointed, and, after a few thoughtful puffs, said—

"I have often been astonished, O, Yacoub, that a people so wise and intelligent as it must be admitted the Franks generally are, should take such delight in old stones. Praise be to God, I know nothing of Nimroud and Athoor that you have been telling me of, except that one of them put our Father Ibraheem, upon whom be peace, into a great furnace, from which he miraculously escaped. They were both Kafirs, and have, doubtless, been roasting in Gehennam for many years on account of their misdeeds, so

* Consul.

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why should you or I trouble our heads about them? Did I not know that the Ingleez are a truth-speaking nation, I should suspect that you were telling me falsehoods when you assure me that crowds of people in your country go to gaze upon these idols. I have heard that they of your nation curse the other Christians who worship images, and I know that Musa the Prophet was charged by Allah the Exalted to forbid the making of such abominations. Why even the mountain Nestorians would not suffer a picture in their houses, and are you less wise than they?

"I remember I once went to the house of a Frank who passed through here a little time ago, and he received me with great honour. We sat down together in peace, and were quietly smoking when a dog of a Jew brought some worn and rusted coins, for which I would not have given a para. The Frank acted as if the father of the Djin (genii) had possessed him. He leaped from his sofa like one who had discovered a treasure. He viewed the rubbish as if it had been some beautiful damsel, and gave the old thief of a Jew a sum which would have kept my household for a week. The cunning rogue departed laughing in his sleeve, may confusion rest upon him, and the Frank left me hastily, without saying peace

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be with you, to examine his purchase. I asked the servant if they were relics or pictures of saints that his Excellency worshipped, but he only laughed at my beard. Verily the Franks are a strange people."

After this speech, a long one for him, my old friend kept silence till the sound of the Muezzin's voice summoned him to quit his beloved pipe. His sentiments, however, represent accurately the feelings of his countrymen with regard to antiquities.

Even my friend——, one of the most intelligent Orientals I ever met, and a person well acquainted with European habits and tastes, could not account for or enter into our admiration for antiquities. "When I was in Rome," said he to a countryman, "I found the Franks more attentive to these old Pagan images than to the rites of their own worship. The churches were deserted, and the museums and galleries thronged. These Westerns seem to pay the same devotion to a statue or an antique that we do to the blessed saints."

I think it was St. Jerome who once said, addressing our European ancestors: "The churches are adorned with costly marbles and pictures, which every one flocks to admire. Gold and purple are lavished on senseless structures, while the poor of Christ, the living image of the great Creator, are abandoned to

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suffering and neglect. Would that you who make so much of an inanimate mass of marble would feel for the miseries of the moving and breathing statue."

The Easterns at least do not merit the application of the latter portion of the sentence.

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CHAPTER XV.

Easter. A Death and Funeral. Kas Botros and Kas Michael. The Christian Fugitive. The Merchant of Baghdad. Religious Parties of Mosul. A Reformer. A baptized Mahommedan.

THE season of Lent is rigorously observed by the Christians of the Oriental churches. Few of them touch any food till after midday, when they take a slight repast, which sustains them until sunset. The close of the period of mortification was drawing nigh at the time of my return to Mosul, and men and women were looking forward with no small satisfaction to the celebration of the Easter Festival. The Pope had sent an indulgence to his Chaldean children, in virtue of which the severity of the fast was to be in some measure mitigated, but they had declined to avail

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themselves of the favour, as it was deemed an infringement of ancient customs.

Easter came at last, and we distinguished it by a feast at the English Consulate, in which that noted dish of the Arabian nights, lamb stuffed with Pistachio nuts, formed no unimportant item of the repast. Prayers had previously been said in our little chapel, and after dinner we walked abroad to pay the compliments of Easter to our numerous acquaintance. Their feast, however, did not occur till some days after, when the whole of the Christian population appeared abroad dressed in their gayest habiliments, which were set off by their happy and joyous countenances. Friends stopped in the street to greet one another with the glad announcement, "Kam el Meseeh, the Christ, has risen," while the wealthy and respectable made the hearts of their poorer brethren joyful with their donations of money and rice.

Yet amidst the universal joy one heart at least in Mosul was feeling the most poignant affliction. Mr. ——, one of the American missionaries, had long been struggling with a malignant and incurable disorder, and the echo of the mirth called forth by the high and joyous festival had scarcely died away before his wife found herself a lonely widow in the

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midst of a strange country. The last breath had not long left the body of the departed when his friends were called upon to solemnize his funeral obsequies. The Chaldean clergy, instigated by the Italian missionaries, had refused even a grave to one whom they considered a heretic, but the Syrian Jacobites came forward and offered to bestow alike a place of burial and the rites of their church on the stranger from a distant land.

The whole of the Europeans in Mosul accompanied the mournful cortège as it defiled slowly through the narrow streets of the city to the Syrian church. The coffin was placed before the altar, with lights at each end, and the numerous assemblage listened in solemn silence to the deep-toned chant of the priests and deacons who recited those passages from scripture which contain the accounts of the burial of Sarah and of Jacob.

After a brief ceremony the bearers took up their load once more, and conveyed it to an open grave in the cemetry attached to the church. A prayer from one of the missionaries followed, and the remains of their brother were lowered into their final resting place. The deceased had been generally beloved on account of the kindness and amiability of his manners, and even those who differed widely from him in

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creed could hardly restrain themselves from bestowing a tear to the memory of one whose piety and humility had endeared him to all.

Soon after this mournful event, two Chaldean priests, Kas Michael and Kas Botros, arrived at Mosul. In the latter I had the pleasure of greeting an old Malta acquaintance, and one of the most talented members of the oriental priesthood I ever encountered. He had formerly belonged to the Romish Syrians, but from long study and examination had come to the conclusion that the doctrines of the Church of England were purer than those of Rome or of any oriental community. He had been in great danger from the machinations of his enemies, who had seized already a small estate which he possessed near Aleppo, and would willingly have incarcerated his person also, had he not obtained the protection of the English consul. Kas Michael was a Chaldean, and had formerly been a monk at Rabban Hormuzd.

Kas Botros had taken up his abode at my house, and was accompanied thither by a poor Christian from Aleppo, who had been much persecuted on account of some property which a merciless Mohammedan was endeavouring to wrest from him. The day after his arrival, a kawass of the Pasha appeared

ASHMOLEAN OXFORD MUSEUM
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to demand his person of me. Having, however, ascertained the injustice of the case, I determined to act upon the maxim that every Frank's house is his castle, a piece of traditional law generally recognized in Turkey. I accordingly bolted the outer door, and answered the knocking of the kawass from a small terrace that overlooked the street.

"Khowajah Yacoub," said the official, "I am sent from His Excellency the Pasha to enter your house, and to seize the person of a runaway debtor who has taken refuge there. Will you open the door?"

"Assuredly I will not," was my reply. "Am I your porter, O man! Make your way in if you are able, but I draw no bolt for you!"

"Very well; I shall return to-morrow," said the kawass, as he departed.

No time was to be lost. I gave the poor Christian a small sum, by means of which he bribed the guard at the gate, and before his persecutors returned the next morning he was on his way to Baghdad. I ordered my servant to admit them, but their search was, of course, ineffectual, and they retired muttering no very complimentary comments on my conduct. Old Mohammed, who was, as usual, enjoying his pipe on my diwan, was highly amused, and laughed heartily when the intruders had departed.

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"Verily, you are a Sheitan, Khowajah Yacoub," said he.

That I may do the Mohammedans full justice, however, I will relate an instance of rare and unexpected generosity which took place some time before my arrival at Mosul.

A poor Christian merchant of the latter place had been unfortunate in his speculations, so much so, indeed, that there was no prospect of satisfying his numerous creditors, among whom was a rich Mohammedan merchant of Baghdad that he had only seen once or twice. At length his affairs became in such an embarrassed state that he had no money left, so that when one of his Mosul creditors came to his house and insisted upon being paid, the poor man was driven to his wit's end.

"May Allah and the Virgin assist me," he exclaimed, "I know not what to do or to say."

"Pay me my debt, O Christian dog!" roared the inexorable creditor, "or by Allah you shall be dragged to prison, where you will eat stick without measure or limit."*

"Have pity upon me, miserable wretch that I am," supplicated the unhappy debtor. "Give me

* To eat stick is a metaphorical expression for the bastinado. It is not, as may be imagined, a very digestible species of food.

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but a little time, and I will endeavour to satisfy your demand."

"By our holy prophet," was the reply, "I will not grant your request, O, unclean; and hear me, if the money is not paid before to-morrow, at noon, you will find yourself in prison and in chains."

With this menace the angry creditor departed, leaving his unfortunate debtor to no very enviable reflections. All the miseries which he might expect would be heaped upon him before another sunset came in succession before his agitated mind. He was sensible that he had to look forward not merely to loss of liberty, but to tortures and torments which every rigid creditor in the East has the power of inflicting. His faith also would be an additional offence in the eyes of his persecutors, who, instigated by their bigotry, consider mercy to a Christian almost as a crime. His wife and children, too, must be left defenceless and alone, exposed to all the temptations and privations of helpless indigence. It was a sore moment for the poor man, and when he saw his favourite little daughter running up the stairs of the terrace to embrace him, he felt, as he pressed her to his bosom, that he could almost rejoice if the Holy Angels bore her away that instant from a world of sorrow.

The sight of a raft making ready for its voyage

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down the river to Baghdad turned his thoughts to his rich creditor in that city. He had heard him well spoken of as a man of generous and liberal character, and one who was humane and charitable to all who were in need, "But he is a Moslem," reflected the poor Christian, "and, like the rest of his sect, would be but too glad to trample on the despised Nazarene."

At this moment a strong temptation came into his mind. If he could obtain a few days delay, a wealthy relative at Diarbekir had promised him the loan of a sum sufficient to discharge his present debts in Mosul, and he would then be saved from the dreaded prison and the tortures. What if he gave his pressing creditor an order upon the merchant at Baghdad for the money he demanded. The time occupied by the voyage there, and the journey back, would afford ample leisure for a trusty messenger to go to Diarbekir and to return with the advanced loan, from which he could both pay the debt and silence his creditor, whom he knew to be an avaricious greedy man, with such a present as would appease his anger at the bootless errand.

He thought over his plan all night, and although at first his conscience reproached him with intended duplicity, its remonstrances were overpowered by the

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cruel images of future suffering, which his mind had conjured up. The result of his cogitations was tha he determined to carry it into execution.

Early the next morning he rose from broken and uneasy slumbers, rendered more unquiet by visions of chains, gloomy dungeons, and scourges. Very welcome was the cool breeze that played upon his fevered cheek as he leaned on the wall of his balcony, and his aching eye wandered over the mounds of Nineveh to the distant Kurdish mountains, the abode of the free.

Should the worst happen, I can escape thither with my family, he thought. The Nestorians, our ancient brethren, will afford shelter and protection to an oppressed fugitive, and even the Kurds are not fond of delivering up one who has sought the shadow of their roofs.

His meditations were interrupted by the unwelcome voice of his creditor in the court below. He descended to meet him, and endeavoured to put on the air of a man who though unfortunate is not wholly destitute of resources.

"Salaam Khowajah Ibraheem," he said, "I have thought over our conversation yesterday, and I must certainly avow that I am able to pay your demand, though it will much inconvenience me. I have en-

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trusted a sum to Suleiman Aga at Baghdad, with which he is to purchase for me some merchandise from el Hind. The vessels do not arrive till after at least fourteen days, so that he has the money still in his hands. Yet the payment of this sum will greatly distress me, seeing that I have no immediate means of replacing what I had destined to be the price of the Indian goods, which I must therefore lose the opportunity of purchasing if you refuse to wait."

Ibraheem listened to his speech with increasing satisfaction, for he knew that a bill on Suleiman was like so much gold, and as he had occasion to go to Baghdad on affairs of his own, the voyage would not much signify. He replied therefore, in as conciliatory a tone as he could assume, that he was grieved that his own necessities obliged him to insist on instant payment: but he secretly chuckled to himself as he placed in the bosom of his gown the paper which the Christian had just written with a trembling hand. He was indeed so full of self congratulation, that he did not observe the pale mournful expression of his debtor who, after his departure, threw himself on his diwan, and, covering his face with his hands, wept long and bitterly.

Days rolled on, but although a messenger had been dispatched to Diarbekir the very morning of

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Ibraheem's departure, and had been charged to ride as if Azrael were behind him, he tarried and came not. At length the Christian received the intelligence that Ibraheem had returned, and was even then entering the Baghdad gate of Mosul. The poor Nazarene trembled at the prospect of his wrath. He made an attempt to escape that very night: but His Excellency the Pasha, from some caprice or other, having given orders that no one should leave the city, he was rudely repulsed by the guardians of the gate. Returning to his house he spent the night in fear and agitation, scarcely knowing what course to adopt. At length he determined to go to Ibraheem, confess the fraud he had practised, and surrender himself to his vengeance.

The morning breeze was blowing cool and refreshing from the mountains of Kurdistan, as he set forth the next morning on his unpleasant errand. More than one church was open, and the worshippers were pouring in for the morning prayers. The poor merchant entered, and joined in the service; and when it was over he bent his burning forehead to the cool marble pavement, and prayed earnestly for deliverance from peril, and that He who sways the thoughts of all men, would soften the stony heart of his adversary, and incline him to compassion and pity.

He left the church, and, quickening his pace, ar-

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rived at the house of Ibraheem just as that person was crossing his own threshold to go forth to his daily avocations. To the astonishment of the Christian the countenance of his creditor became radiant with the most cringing civility.

"Djanum, O my soul!" said he, "you are welcome to the dwelling of the unworthy Ibraheem. Will you not honour me by entering and drinking a pipe* since it is yet early, and to a guest like you all business must give place."

The Christian stared in utter amazement at Ibraheem while he uttered this complimentary address. "Verily," he thought within himself, "the Djin of Babel, which I have heard of from the Holy writings, must have possessed the man." He restrained his astonishment, however, and sat down as invited.

"O, my friend," said the obsequious Ibraheem as he handed to his guest with a low bend the pipe which he had lit, "why did you not tell me that you are even as the brother of Suleiman Aga. Evil light upon my head that I should behave with such rudeness to the friend of so excellent a man."

* The Orientals use the word "drink" in lieu of "smoke." It arises probably from the fact that the first pipes invented were those termed Narguilehs or Hookahs, in which the smoke, drawn through water, is inhaled by the smoker in a manner which much resembles the act of drinking.

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"You speak parables, O Ibraheem!" said the surprised Christian.

"I say what is the truth," replied his host. "I went to Baghdad with your paper, and my first care was to repair to Suleiman Aga. Mashallah! what a house is his! On my head, it is far larger and more beautiful than the palace of our Pasha! Well, I entered into the court and saw a number of mendicants, Christians as well as Mohammedans, who were receiving from the servants large bowls of rice. "Has something extraordinary occurred, O man!" said I to one of the beggars who stood near me, "that this distribution is taking place?"—'It happens daily,' he replied. 'May God grant long life to Suleiman Aga. He is the father of the poor.'"

"I then signified to one of the slaves, a stout black, whose cheeks were as well stuffed as the cushions of my best diwan, that I wished to see Suleiman Aga.

"'Follow me, my master,' he replied, and led the way into a large room where, reclining on cushions richly embroidered, sat the prince of the Baghdad merchants. I made a low obeisance and would have taken my seat at the lower end of the room, but Suleiman motioned me to sit by his side. Pipes and coffee were served, and, after a few compliments, I

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related the object of my journey and produced your document. Suleiman seemed surprised as he read it carefully through; but, after pondering awhile, he said, 'Tell me the circumstances under which you received this paper.' Whereupon I told him all that had happened between me and yourself. When Suleiman had heard my tale his countenance grew stern, and he said, 'O, Ibraheem, you have been hard and severe upon my friend and my brother; nevertheless, here is your money and something besides for the expenses of the journey. Return to Mosul, and tell the Christian merchant that in a month's time from the present day I expect to see him beneath the shadow of my roof.' I began to excuse myself, but Suleiman stopped me. 'The heart of the covetous,' he said, 'is like the ocean: it can never be filled. Depart in peace, and henceforth learn to show mercy to the unfortunate.' Ashamed, I left his presence and returned to Mosul. My intention was to seek you out to-day and relate what had occurred; though doubtless Suleiman Aga, your excellent friend, has already made it known to you by letter. I must have been medjnoon* to have treated so worthy a man as yourself in so rude a manner, but I trust that you and your brother Suleiman Aga will pardon me."

* Mad.

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Soon after the Christian merchant left the house, astonished beyond measure at the munificence of Suleiman Aga. He could hardly believe that one, almost a stranger, would have befriended him in such a manner, or that a Mohammedan would have given help and assistance to a Christian. Penetrated with gratitude, he rushed into the nearest church and gave vent to his feelings in energetic and heartfelt thanksgivings. Afterwards he went to his house, took a hasty farewell of his family, and embarked on a raft that was just then leaving for Baghdad. When he arrived at the City of Peace, he hastened to the house of Suleiman, and, throwing himself at his feet, confessed at once the imposition and entreated his forgiveness.

The Prince of the Baghdad merchants bade him rise and be seated, assuring him that the past was pardoned and forgotten. He even invited him to take up his quarters for a few days at his house, and bestowed upon him some magnificent robes in lieu of his travel-stained vestments. After dinner, when they were alone, the Christian was profuse in his expressions of gratitude, and ventured to hint his surprise that a stranger should confer a benefit so costly on one utterly unknown to him.

"O, my brother," said Suleiman, "Allah, the

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exalted, is the Father of us all, and has committed the poor and the unfortunate to the care of the wealthy and the prosperous. When we aid the misfortunes of one another, and supply from our own abundance the deficiencies of our fellow men, we do but relieve those who are closely related to us by the ties of nature and position. The shewing of compassion renders us like to Him whose chosen title is El Raham, the Merciful One."

"But I am a Christian, O Suleiman," said the Mosul merchant, "and the professors of your creed deem us worse than the dogs of the streets."

"The Maker of all," was the reply, "has caused the birds to differ in the colour of their plumage, and men in their opinions; but both the Koran and the Injeel agree in enjoining charity and mercy."

The day after, the Christian left for his native city, bearing with him a large sum lent him by the munificent Suleiman, who proved ever afterwards his sure and staunch friend. The aid so seasonably rendered enabled him to retrieve his losses, and to repay in a short time the money advanced, as well as the original debt. Mindful of the lesson taught him by the liberality of the Mohammedan, he endeavoured in after life to imitate his example; bestowing his bounties on all who needed them, without

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any distinction of religion or sect. Among the objects of his charity was his former creditor, Ibraheem, who became unfortunate in his old days, and was indebted to the kindness of the man whom he had persecuted, for an asylum in his time of need. At a good old age the worthy merchant slept with his fathers, and the corpse was accompanied to its last resting-place by crowds of the unfortunate and the miserable, who lamented with sincere and unfeigned grief the loss of their munificent benefactor and friend.

The Priests Botros and Michael very soon found it necessary to move from my house, to one in the middle of the quarter inhabited chiefly by the Chaldean Christians. Their arrival at Mosul had created no small stir, and the Italian missionaries instigated the clergy of the town to curse them from their altars, and to prohibit, under pain of excommunication, any person from holding the least intercourse with them. They were induced to take these violent measures, from fear of the reforming spirit which had begun to manifest itself among the Christians of Mosul.

For several centuries, the Nestorians of Mesopotamia, Persia, and Assyria, had maintained an independent and hostile attitude with regard to the

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pretensions of the see of Rome. The numerous Papal emissaries who had endeavoured, from time to time, to win over the discontented and the factious, two classes rarely absent from any community, to even a nominal submission to the Papal supremacy, had most singularly failed in their attempts. Their arguments and their bribes proved alike ineffectual, till the disappointed vanity of a Nestorian prelate came to their aid, and effected a schism, the fruits of which became more manifest in succeeding years.

The same century which witnessed the Reformation, and the detachment of nearly the whole of northern Europe from the Pope's spiritual dominions, beheld a Nestorian bishop prostrate at the feet of Julius III. A spirited contest for the possession of the patriarchate of the East, had arisen between Simeon Barmamas and John Sulaka. The character of the former has been differently described by friends and enemies. The one revere him as the reformer of many abuses and superstitions which had crept into the Chaldean Church; while the latter represent him as a heretical and impious tyrant, whose sacrilegious hand was stretched forth to profane and abolish the pious customs of devout antiquity. He was probably one of those men who, with the best intentions, enter upon the work of

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reform with more zeal and precipitate haste, than prudence, and avert, by their ill-judging violence, the co-operation of those who would otherwise be well disposed towards the objects which they have in view.

The wishes of the majority being in favour of Simeon, the baffled Sulaka determined to strengthen himself by foreign alliances. He repaired to Rome, and in the presence of the Pontiff, abjured the errors of Nestorius, and received, as a reward, the title of Patriarch of the Chaldeans. In process of time, he formed a large party, distinguished by their submission to the Roman supremacy, and the self-assumed appellation of the Chaldean Church. After many dissensions and divisions, the Christians of Assyria arranged themselves at last into three bodies, two of whom obeyed the Papal Patriarchs of Diarbekir and Mosul, while the hardy mountaineers of Tiyari and Ooromiah maintained obstinately their adherence to the tenets of Nestorius, and the authority of Mar Shimon. The heads of the Diarbekir and Mosul Romanists, were distinguished by the names of Joseph and Elias, which descended, with the dignity, to the nephew and successor of each Patriarch.

The changes in the services and ritual of the Papal Chaldeans, were slight and trifling. A few words of

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ambiguous import introduced into a Liturgy composed in a dead language, were little likely to awaken the suspicions or inflame the discontent of the multitude. But when in after times more manifest innovations were foisted into the old system, murmurs began to be heard, accompanied by some faint signs of opposition. The Papal emissaries, however, went steadily on. Pictures crept into the churches, and the image-hating Nestorians beheld, with a mixture of horror and disgust, the elevation of a waxen idol in the sanctuary of God. The confession-boxes were also introduced, and it was even announced that a Latin liturgy was to be substituted for the old Chaldean missal. But the worst had yet to come.

A few years before my arrival, the Patriarch of Mosul died, and bequeathed his honours and his name to a nephew, who had been educated under his own eye. The new Patriarch was about to solicit the approbation and confirmation of the Roman Pontiff, when it was announced at Mosul that the right of nomination had been transferred from the Chaldean clergy to the Supreme Head of the Church; and that he had appointed Mar Nicholas, a Persian bishop, of doubtful character, to the patriarchate. This news excited general indignation. After a faint and feeble resistance, however, Mar Elia abdicated

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his rights, or at least quietly acquiesced in the usurpation of another; and the last descendant of a line of patriarchs, retired to a state of poverty and obscurity in one of the neighbouring villages.

We found the Chaldeans of Mosul, therefore, divided into two parties, one of which recognized the pretensions of Mar Nicholas, the Papal nominee, while the other, without absolutely rejecting him, retained a secret fidelity to the fallen house of Elia.

The latter party, soon added to their private animosity towards the authority of Rome, a hearty and determined dislike of the novelties which the Papal party had introduced. They complained that new and unapproved rites, supported neither by Scripture nor tradition, had been forced upon them by the machinations of a foreign priesthood. The celebration of the mass in the chapel of the Italian missionaries, was intended, they asserted, to prepare the way for its general adoption. The impediments laid in the way of the circulation of the Scriptures, they censured as policy of which even Mohammedans would be ashamed; while they pointed out in coarse and bitter irony, the lamentable results of an enforced celibacy on the morals of the clerical body.

In countries where circumstances allow of the exercise of arbitrary power, the motto of the Church

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of Rome has always been "argue not, but strike." One Sunday morning, thirteen of the discontented were solemnly excommunicated, and a curse denounced against those who should converse or have any dealings with them.

One of these men was the leader of the rest, and was noted in the city for being among the most determined opponents of Rome. He was a short, square-built personage, with a burly face, more English than Chaldean. Though a little extreme in his views, like all reformers, his motives were single and pure. He desired to see his church freed from the hateful yoke of the stranger, and was ready to sacrifice anything to obtain so valuable an end. The rude eloquence of his tones, and the overwhelmning ridicule which he poured unsparingly upon his shrinking and cowardly adversaries, might have been considered worthy of a more enlarged sphere of action. The Papist party dreaded his approach, and fled from the sound of his voice as the Trojans retreated at the shout of Achilles. They endeavoured to incense the Pasha against him, but his bold daring had won the esteem of one who was in some respects a kindred spirit, and the Governor bade the accusers be gone, adding that Georgios was quite right in exposing the folly of a set of insane worshippers of images.

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Some Mollahs made our friend tempting offers if he would embrace the religion of the Prophet, but Georgios, while he disliked its corruptions, was sincerely attached to the Christian faith. He generally attended the daily service in our little chapel, and expressed himself much gratified with the purity and simplicity of the English ritual.

One day while on a visit to Kas Botros, an old Mohammedan came in and taking up a book of the Gospels which lay on the diwan, expressed himself much pleased with its contents. A conversation ensued, during which he informed us that he himself had been baptized in his infancy, by a Christian priest.

"That is curious," remarked Kas Botros, "I certainly never heard of that practice before."

"It is often performed in Mosul," replied the old Moslem, "for most of us who live here are descended from Christian parents, who have become at various times, professors of Islam. Not many years ago, I have heard old men say, that a Christian Pasha bare rule here, and Christians were above the Moslem in those days. On my head they were powerful then, and even a Mohammedan Governor did not care to interfere with them. But since they quarrelled among themselves, they have become weak as water.

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"Is it common then in this city, I enquired, for Mohammedan children to be baptized?"

"On my head it is," he answered; "I will tell you how it happened with me. I had not long left my mother's arms when I was taken very sick. My mother was distracted, for the physician gave me up and said that Azrael was even then flapping his wings over my head. Then my mother slapped her face and tore her hair and called to my sister to run for the Mollah. He came and gave her a verse of the Koran, to hang about my neck in a little bag, for which he demanded five piastres, which my mother willingly paid, for she would gladly even have sold all her jewels to save my life. Still I grew worse and worse, and every one thought I was going to die, when an old Christian woman came in to visit my mother.

"'Ayesha,' said the new comer, 'Djanum my soul, do not lament and grieve, but listen to what I am about to tell you. Your child's life may depend on it. Let me call our Priest to baptize your son and by the mercy of the Holy Virgin, he shall recover.'

"'But what will the Mollah say?' argued my mother.

"'The Mollah is an ass, Djanum,' said the old

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woman, 'he told me once our sex should never see Paradise. Ah, Christianity is the religion for women. They say the Franks in the west, even worship their females.'

"'Run then Rachel and fetch the Priest,' said my mother, 'I am willing to try every means to save my child's life.'

"So old Kas Zachariah came and Baptised me, and soon after, praise be to God, I recovered."

"Then do you attribute your recovery to your Baptism?" asked I.

"Allah the exalted knows," said the old Mohammedan, thoughtfully, as he arose to take his leave.

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CHAPTER XVI.

Nestorian Troubles and Massacre. Flight of the Patriarch. The Italian Juggler. Death of Mohammed Pasha. The Impostor. Nebbi Sheeth.

At the commencement of June, 1843, rumours of a strange and distressing character, reached Mosul from the region of the Tiyari Nestorians. Various fugitives who had barely escaped with their lives from the murderous attacks of the Kurds, reported that their once peaceful country was now a scene of desolating and savage warfare. From day to day more disastrous tidings were arriving, till at length it was announced that the Patriarch himself, with a considerable body of his clergy and flock, were upon their way to Mosul, intending to place themselves under the protection of the Vice-Consul of England, and to solicit through him the interposition of the British

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Government, with the Ottoman Porte. In order, however, to save the reader and myself much unnecessary trouble, I shall endeavour to trace from their commencement, the causes which led to the Nestorian massacre. I am the more anxious to do this, in order to contradict the false and calumnious statement, which appeared in some English newspapers, during the latter part of the year 1843.

The town of Jezirah has been already mentioned as situated on a small island formed by the Tigris, which in that place flows directly at the foot of the Kurdish mountains. Inhabited almost exclusively by Kurds, it may indeed be considered as part of Kurdistan, and though nominally under the Pasha of Erzeroum, the real government of it and part of the adjacent mountain territory, has been confided to the charge of Kurdish chiefs, who claim the title of Beys of Jezirah.

At the period of my visit, the ruler of this insular town was Beder Khan, a man of some talent and more ambition. A kind of Oriental Cromwell in his way, he had obtained great influence and power by his known zeal for the tenets of the Koran, and unqualified abhorrence of Christians. Bigotted Kurds and fanatical Mollahs, fanned his prejudices, and flattered his ambition, with the prospect of erecting Kurdistan

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into an independent kingdom. The only obstacle to his wishes was the existence of a Christian power in the midst of the mountains, whose political interests rendered them likely to prove most inimical to his views.

The chosen ally and confederate of the Jezirah chief, was the Emir of Hakkari, a district to the north-east of Mosul. This man, whose name was Noor Allah Bey, had gained an unenviable notoriety from his having connived at the murder of the European traveller Schulz. Dark, sullen, and ferocious, he was distinguished above all the Kurdish chiefs, by his many acts of savage cruelty. He hated the Christians, and longed for nothing so much as an opportunity of showing his dislike by deeds.

Mohammed Pasha of Mosul, was said to have become a party to a nefarious arrangement, whereby he engaged himself to allow the two Kurdish confederates to pursue their designs unmolested, provided he received a certain portion of the spoil. It is probable also, that his brother of Erzeroum, was not so ignorant of the intended plot as he found it afterwards necessary to pretend.

Having arranged their plan of operation, the two Kurdish chieftains discovered that a pretext for aggression was easily found. A sligh quarrel between

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the Nestorians of one of the villages of Dez and some neighbouring Kurds, was made use of as a pretence for beginning a bloody and exterminating war. Pleading the authority of an order from the Pasha of Erzeroum Beder Khan Bey invaded the Nestorian territory at the head of a Kurdish force. Noor Allah Bey attacked them on the other side, and the Christians found that they were suddenly surrounded by foes.

Relying on the amity which had for some time subsisted between the Patriarch and the Kurdish chiefs, they had taken no care to provide themselves with arms. At the commencement of the war they were massacred by hundreds without resistance, but the first panic of surprise having past away, despair lent them courage and the means of defence. The peasant sharpened up the rusty sword which had so long lain neglected in the corner of his cottage, and prepared for more deadly warfare, the long rifle which had hitherto been used only against the wild deer of the mountains. The husbandman in lieu of more perfect implements of defence converted his tools into weapons, and though distracted and divided among themselves by the arts of the Kurds, the Christians of the mountains determined to struggle manfully for their lives and liberties.

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The conflict was desperate and sanguinary, for it was literally a war to the knife. The Kurds treated their captives with such barbarity that the Christians perceived it was useless to count upon the mercy or magnanimity of their captors. They chose in most instances, therefore, to die with arms in their hands, rather than be reserved for the tortures, which the cruelty of the infidels delighted in inflicting.

In any captured villages, the ruthless barbarians tossed infants and children in fiendish sport on the points of their pikes, and reserved the youth of maturer age for ignominy worse than death. The groans of men expiring under the most dreadful tortures, and the shrieks and cries of insulted women, filled the whole region, while troops of helpless captives were driven like oxen down the steep paths of the Kurdish mountains.

On one occasion, a fortress into which a body of armed Kurds had thrown themselves was besieged by the Nestorians. The former held out for some time hoping for the arrival of succours from the main army of Beder Khan Bey. At length they became exceedingly distressed for want of water, and promised upon the Koran to capitulate if they were allowed a plentiful supply from a well in the rear of the besiegers. The unsuspicious Christians granted them

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the permission desired, and even aided them in drawing the water. When the Kurds had satisfied their thirst, they retracted their solemn engagement and refused to deliver up the castle. The same day the expected succours arrived, a sharp contest ensued, in which the Christians were defeated, and many of them taken prisoners.

The Kurdish commander incensed at the loss of men which he had sustained, ordered a large fire to be kindled in the square or market-place of the next village. His directions were obeyed, and forcing his captives to sit round the blazing pile, he commanded his soldiers to force their legs into the flames, and thus gradually to burn the unfortunate men alive.

The struggle was carried on by both parties, at first with almost equal success, but it soon became evident that the Christians were the weaker, and must eventually succumb. Various circumstances contributed to their defeat. In the first place the Maleks or chiefs of the Nestorians were divided among themselves, and jealous of the patriarchal power. In times of warfare too, an Ecclesiastical government is rarely able to develop successfully those measures of resistance and opposition, which are often necessary to the safety of the state. For many years the spiritual chiefs of the Tiyari had

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maintained their position more by the arts of policy than of war. The Maleks felt themselves without a leader or guide in the hour of battle, and many of them were disposed to undervalue a ruler, whose marked deficiency in the arts which they themselves excelled in, was becoming daily more apparent.

Had the Patriarch been emulous of the actions performed by the warlike clergy of Europe in the middle ages he might have exchanged his mitre for a helmet, and unfurling the banner of the cross, called upon his people to charge the infidels boldly in the name of God, and of St. George*. Had he possessed the sentiments of an ancient Puritan, he would have exhorted his vassals to smite the modern Moabites and Amalekites with the edge of the sword, in nearly the same language that was used by Joshua and Gideon†. But he had neither the talents nor the enthusiasm necessary to inflame the ardour of his subjects, although there is strong reason to believe that they would readily have responded to his exhortations.

Moreover the temper of the Orientals is most averse to complicated and united movements, however well

* St. George has long been the favourite saint of the Chaldeans, if one may judge from the numerous churches that bear his name.

† The Chaldee bears a strong similarity to the Hebrew.

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adapted for desultory and irregular warfare. The Nestorian who defended with dauntless bravery the safety of his hearth and the honour of his family would have been as reluctant an an ancient Highlander to abandon his local position for a main army, whose rendezvous was distant from his own abode. Unskilled in military manœuvres he chose rather to rescue his humble dwelling from its assailants, or if he failed to redden the threshold of his fathers with his blood. When his village was burnt, and his wife and children slain or captives; he still maintained a species of Guerilla warfare with his trusty rifle from crag to crag. When driven to his last retreat he stood like the wolves of his native mountains boldly at bay, and left the marks of his expiring prowess on the bodies of his foes.

During the continuation of this contest, the Pasha of Mosul, who was well informed of all the events that had taken place in the mountains, affected the utmost astonishment at the movements of the Kurds. His pretended regret, however, was too palpable to deceive those who knew his character, and were well aware that a Turkish regiment backed by a detachment of Albanians, with two or three field pieces would have terminated the war at once.

The reverses of the Christians became more marked

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and at length the Patriarch was hunted from village to village with a small but faithful band of supporters, who refused to desert him in his distress. One of his last asylums was a small collection of huts on the banks of the Zab, where a visitation of a most painful character was destined to fall on his doomed head. A little higher up the river, the Kurds had succeeded in capturing the mother and one of the brothers of the Patriarch. The age, sex, and rank of the former might have pleaded in her behalf, but such appeals were lost upon the savage barbarians, who after offering shameful insults to their defenceless captive, finally butchered her in the most savage manner, and cutting the corpse in four pieces, they sent the mutilated remains, secured to a small raft, floating down the Zab. Some Christians saw it as it passed the temporary refuge of the Patriarch, they brought it to the shore, and the unfortunate and broken hearted chieftain bent in mute agony over the dishonoured form of her who had given him birth. His spirit was now overwhelmed with calamities, and he determined to strive no longer, but to seek in Mosul a refuge from his pursuers.

The knowledge that the Patriarch had abandoned the Tiyari country, was the signal for a vast tide of fugitives to descend to the plains. The villages on

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the site of Nineveh were filled with men, women, and children, covered with wounds, and suffering from their forced marches through the rocky defiles of Kurdistan. Numbers sank exhausted on the stony soil never to rise again; women clasped to their bosoms the cold and lifeless memorials of a husband slain in defending them from outrage. Sorrow and grief seemed the portion of the unhappy Nestorians, and the Patriarch not unaptly availed himself of the mournful language of the Prophet Jeremiah to express the extent of his own and his people's misfortunes.

One morning, as I was sitting with my friend B. in the court-yard of his house, it was announced that Mar Shimon had entered Mosul, and would shortly arrive at the English Consulate. We immediately repaired thither, and in a few minutes the Patriarch made his appearance. He possessed a tall muscular figure, with more of the bearing of a soldier than of an ecclesiastic. His dress was strikingly dissimilar to the usual episcopal vestments of the East. A pair of long scarlet pantaloons and a short jacket seemed somewhat strange vestments for an Oriental Catholicos. Such habiliments, however, might be necessary in the mountains, where long flowing robes would have been attended with inconvenience, if not with danger.

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The Patriarch's manner was gentle and subdued. A marked melancholy sat on his features, and his hair, although his years did not exceed thirty, was prematurely grey. His Archdeacon, Kas Auraha, or Abraham, and his two brothers, in deacon's orders, who had escaped the late massacre, accompanied him.

The Patriarch and his principal attendants were accommodated with rooms in the Consulate, while I opened my house to the numerous fugitives who came pouring in daily. They occupied chiefly the subterranean apartments, which were very spacious and they always sought opportunities of viewing from the terraces, the far distant hills of their mountain home.

My new guests were very orderly in their manners, though wild in their appearance. Only one decided quarrel broke out among them during their abode with me, and this was occasioned by a half-crazy old man, who served the Patriarch in the double capacity of a domestic and buffoon. This worthy was addicted, like many of his countrymen, to the vice of intoxication, and having on one occasion partaken rather freely of the juice of the grape, he grew riotous, and addressed a reproachful epithet to one of his companions. The fiery nature of the

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mountaineer was excited, and he retorted in no complimentary terms. The old buffoon drew his dagger and made a rush at his antagonist, who retreated into an inner apartment and shut the door. Nothing could equal the rage of old Yohannan at being thus balked of his vengeance. Two or three times he burst from those who were restraining him, and drove his knife into the hard wood of the door. At length he was quieted, and after sleeping off his drunkenness, appeared the next morning with a sober and abashed countenance.

Among the Nestorian fugitives was a woman named Martha, who had displayed, under trying circumstances, the courage of a heroine, and the hardihood of the sterner sex. Her story was interesting and worthy of record. In one of the villages of the Tiyari, she had lived in peace for five years with her husband Daniel, a man of some standing among his fellow villagers. Two children had blessed their union, and in few cottages of the mountains could be found a happier or more affectionate pair. The Christian women of the Tiyari possess more freedom than their sisters of the plain, and are trained up in that hardy manner which enables them to face danger, with almost the courage and resolution of a man.

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One evening Martha and Daniel were sitting in their cottage, and talking over the sad rumours which had lately reached the village. It was reported that war had broken out, that many Christians had been massacred, and that a body of Kurds were in the neighbourhood, who intended, in a few days, to make an attack upon them. A sorrowful foreboding seized the mind of Daniel as he took down his rifle and began to clean and arrange it for the approaching struggle. But he looked at his wife and his slumbering children, and he vowed inwardly to defend them to the last gasp.

With the active energy of a female mountaineer, Martha had been polishing and sharpening her husband's sabre, when a red glow was reflected through the small window of the cottage. Daniel opened the door and listened. His house was a few yards distant from the village, but he heard the shots and cries, and saw the flames arising from one or two of the more remote cottages. He hastily shut to the door, and barricaded it in the best way he was able.

A few minutes of fearful expectation had passed, during which Daniel girded on his sword, and loaded his rifle. Footsteps approached the door, and a rough voice demanded admittance in Kurdish.

"I cannot open to strangers," was the reply.

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"Give us instant entrance, you Christian dog," shouted several voices outside, "or we will burn your house without delay."

The Nestorian returned no answer, and the assailants endeavoured to force the door. It resisted their efforts for some time, and when it at last gave way to repeated blows, they found the entrance defended by one who was prepared to maintain his ground with the desperation of a husband and father. One shot from his rifle had struck down one of the Kurds, and he had handed it to Martha to reload while he endeavoured to make good his position with his sabre. At this moment a bullet pierced his heart, and he fell mortally wounded on his threshold. "The bear is dead," said the Kurdish leader, "spare not the cubs."

One of his followers fired his pistol at the eldest boy, and killed him on the spot. The wife had seen her husband fall, with a mute grief that almost paralyzed her exertions, and overwhelmed her with a species of helpless stupor, but the sight of her children's blood, drove the mother almost frantic. The assassin paid the penalty of his brutal act with his life; and Martha casting down the discharged rifle, which had avenged her son, caught up the sabre which had fallen from her husband's dying hand.

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With the fury of a tigress robbed of her young, she snatched up her remaining child, and flew at the Kurds with all the earnestness of desperation. They found themselves unable to resist the fury of her attack, and four of them had fallen dead or wounded, when a small body of Christians arrived in time to rescue the heroic widow from the shame and insults of captivity.

But a sore trial still awaited her. The rescuers feared to remain for any time in the village, lest another attack should be made by a stronger force; and they determined to lose no time in seeking the shelter of the plains. With an embrace, hastily bestowed on the lifeless clay of her loved ones, the widow took up the surviving child, and prepared to leave her former happy home. No tears betrayed her emotion, but the rude mountaineers who accompanied her, remarked her deep silence, and the fixed gaze of her eye. The march was long and dreary, but she uttered no complaint. Many sank exhausted, under their fatigues, but Martha seemed supported by an energy almost preternatural.

At length the exiles reached the town of Mosul, and their expressions of joy betrayed their satisfaction, that they were now in safety. Martha alone maintained a cold and silent indifference. It was

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plain, although they knew it not, that her heart was broken.

The child was soon healed of its wounds, but misfortune seemed to follow it even in exile. A kind of pestilence broke out among the fugitives, and the heroic mother was one of the first victims. Stern, bearded men wept like children, as they followed her to the grave, and the orphan child was regarded and tended with particular affection and care.

A month or two after the arrival of the Patriarch, an Italian conjurer made a visit to Mosul. He was skilful in his trade, and was very desirous of exhibiting his talents before the European residents of the city. Mar Shimon had expressed some curiosity to behold these performances, and it was thought that a little amusement might be acceptable in his distressed state of mind.

A large saloon in B's house was cleared and prepared for the scene of action. At the upper end was a long table behind which stood the juggler with his various apparatus. The Europeans and a large body of Nestorians, as many in fact as could crowd themselves into the room, were present. The Patriarch seemed at first amused at the facetious tricks which were exhibited. He even laughed heartily at the surprise of some of his flock, who found articles of

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their property had suddenly been multiplied or annihilated by the Frank enchanter. At length, however, the conjuror proceeded to exhibit the abstruser mysteries of his art. The Patriarch's face became gradually more serious, and his features at last assumed an expression of deep alarm. He rose hastily from his seat, and whispered to B—— "I can remain no longer, for surely the evil one worketh through this man."

An English merchant, resident at Mosul, had been among the spectators, and by some chance had seated himself next to the Patriarch. His good humoured countenance attracted the attention of the latter, who exchanged with him, during the evening, a mute pantomime of smiles and nods. At the conclusion of the performance, when the Patriarch rose to retire, he presented his hand to this gentleman, expecting, that according to the custom of the East, he would respectfully press it to his lips. But the worthy Englishman, not understanding this mode of salutation, grasped with much vigour the proffered member, and after bestowing on it a hearty shake, said in good earnest English, "I'm glad to make your acquaintance, Mar Shimon."

The representations of Sir Stratford Canning on behalf of the murdered Nestorians had roused the

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Ottoman Government into something like a determination to look into the matter. Beder Khan Bey was no favourite at Stamboul, and the influence of Mohammed Pasha was on the wane. Various complaints of extortion against the latter had awakened the Porte to the fact that his coffers were too full, and might undergo a slight diminution with great profit to his majesty, the Sultan. It is never, however, the nature of Turks to be precipitate. After the usual course of Inshallah and Baccalum* they agreed to send a young Effendi of the Reformed school to investigate into the affair. The English Vice-Consul at Samsoun was joined in commission, and the two gentlemen arrived at Mosul in due time.

While they were on the road tidings of the proposed commission of inquiry had reached the watchful ears of Mohammed Pasha. He had taken very much of late to habits of intoxication; for, like most of his class, he felt and expressed a great contempt for the Mollahs and their doctrines. One morning it was announced that the Pasha was ailing, news which filled all Mosul with secret joy. In the evening he was worse, and Dr. Grant, of the American

* If it please God, and we shall see; two phrases very common in Turkish mouths, especially when they desire to promote delay.

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mission, was requested to hold a consultation with the Armenian Physician of the Pasha. But their efforts were useless, and the remorseful tyrant expired soon afterwards, loudly lamenting in his last moments the injuries which he had done to Mar Shimon.

His death was the signal for a general rejoicing, since all classes felt that they could well spare him. The day of his burial was held as a fête, and numbers appeared abroad clad in their best apparel, and making holiday with their wives and children. Small booths were erected on the banks of the river, and in that part of the city called the quarter of the Tahara, which was covered with gardens and ruins. Had some signal and unexpected good fortune happened to each of the population of Mosul, they could hardly have rejoiced more. It was even feared that they might attempt a riot in the exuberance of their joy. People in the East are so little accustomed to freedom that even the semblance of it produces a species of moral intoxication.

The Mollahs of Mosul had never been great favourites with the late ruler. He had abridged their privileges, and made free on several occasions with their cash. Moreover, he was decidedly opposed to the pious frauds which they sometimes

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played off upon the people in the name of the Prophet.

One day, a pretender to sanctity was detected in a manifest imposition. This fanatic had insinuated himself into the confidence and esteem of an old merchant of Mosul, who was very credulous and very rich. The impostor had promised to obtain for him a vision of houries and the secret of making gold, two things which the old man coveted extremely. His delusion became so great, that he received the dervish into his house and treated him as a son. The fears of his family were even excited that he might make him his heir; a proceeding not at all to their taste. They carried their complaint to the Pasha, who summoned the impostor and his dupe before him.

"Is it true, O Father of Stupidity," said the Governor addressing the old merchant, "that you have been promised visions by this fellow, and that he has instructed you in the art of making gold?"

"It is true, O Pasha," was the reply; "and I fully believe his words."

"Baccalum, we shall see!" observed the Pasha. "Bring the necessary things for inflicting the bastinado."

His orders were obeyed, and four stout kawasses

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entered, bearing each a formidable whip of cow-hide. The dervish eyed these preparations with a rueful look, while the Pasha addressed him in the following words:—

"Unclean fellow that you are, you are imposing upon this man's ignorance and folly, to serve certain purposes of your own. You have asserted that it is in your power to make gold. I therefore command you to transmute this piece of money (throwing down a piastre), into the precious metal, on pain of fifty sticks."

The impostor had no lack of impudence, and he perceived that nothing but an extraordinary effort could save him from the punishment which his roguery had so well deserved. Assuming an injured air, he complained that the Pasha should treat a holy devotee in that rude and peremptory manner. "The secrets of heaven," he concluded, "are only for those who seek them with humility and fasting. I am not at liberty, O Pasha, to discover to you any of these mysteries, unless you will submit to the necessary initiatory process."

"Peki, very well," said his Excellency, "I believe you will soon change your tone. Kawasses, down with this fellow, and beat him soundly till he confesses his villany."

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"I hear and obey," was the reply, as they placed the impostor on his back and began to belabour his feet with their formidable whips. But he was not proof against the pain, and, after a few blows, he expressed his willingness to confess. Having acknowledged his imposture, the Pasha set him at liberty, with a grave caution never to offend again.

The Mollahs, however, were little disposed to admit the justice of a procedure which exposed the knavish doings of their class. They had also another cause of complaint against the deceased Pasha, which, they persuaded the people, had brought down upon him the vengeance of heaven. Among the Mohammedan places of worship in Mosul, was a mosque dedicated to Nebbi Sheeth, or the Prophet Seth, which had been founded and endowed by one of the former Pashas. According to the tenor of the endowment, each successive Governor was bound to be present at an annual sermon preached in this place, and to present the Mollahs attached to it with dresses of honour afterwards.

Like his predecessors, Mohammed Pasha was of course subject to this rule. The sermon he had no objection to, but the price of the dresses was a serious consideration. At length he purchased some tarnished finery of the Jews, who, in the East, as

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well as in the West, exercise their national calling of vendors of old clothes.

At the time appointed the robes were presented, but the Mollahs were grievously offended to find them only second-hand vestments. They remonstrated, but his Excellency declared he would bestow no other apparel; and an altercation ensued, in the course of which the Pasha cursed the Mollahs and their patron, Nebbi Sheeth. Six weeks after, he died, and the devout Mohammedans in Mosul believed that he had fallen a victim to the vengeance of the insulted Prophet.

Immediately after the Pasha's death, seals were put upon his treasure chests, which were shortly after formally appropriated by the Turkish Government. His family received orders to repair to Constantinople, and were granted a small pension wherewith to support themselves.

Mohammed Pasha was a man of very low extraction, and could neither read nor write. Like his contemporary, the Viceroy of Egypt, he had been originally a common soldier. Avarice rendered his administration intolerable to all parties; but, though he scrupled at nothing to obtain his ends, he was not naturally cruel, nor, like many others, did he inflict punishment for the bare luxury of enjoying human

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suffering. His bold and determined character, and the vigorous measures he employed, tended very much to restrain the ravages and depredations of the Kurds.

He left three wives to lament his loss, or to rejoice at their freedom. The eldest of these was a Greek, who had been united to him in the days of poverty, and it was said that he loved her better than any other human being. To her wise counsels and guidance he considered that he owed his good fortune, and to his credit she always received from him the kindest and most respectful treatment. The other two were young Georgians, who enjoyed little consideration from a man who had outlived the attractions of lust.

The town of Mosul is divided into several quarters, the inhabitants of which have a species of hereditary feud with each other. After the Pasha's death several quarrels took place between them, which frequently made parts of the city scenes of riot and confusion. When the emotions of joy at their late release were somewhat abated, not a few of the most wealthy and respectable citizens sighed for the arrival of another Governor, and confessed concerning the late one, almost in the words of Shakspeare, their conviction that "they could have better spared a better man."

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CHAPTER XVII.

The Eastern Christians. Their Opinions. Clergy. General Character.

THE majority of travellers in the East have found themselves constrained to devote a few pages to notices of the present state and tenets of that numerous and influential body the Oriental Christians. Missionary journals have been published to acquaint the public with the differences that prevail among them, to censure their ignorance, or to condemn their superstitions, but neither the traveller nor the missionary seem to have succeeded in exciting the great mass of English readers to feel either interest or curiosity respecting their brethren in the East.

Yet the fault seems to lie not so much in the

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nature of the subject, as in the manner in which it has been generally brought forward. The traveller confines himself to sketches of individuals, while the missionary deals with systems, and neither represent to us, in one single and concentrated view, the workings and developments of the latter as exemplified by the habits, manners, and belief of the former. But, that I may not seem to censure in others, what I have myself been afraid of attempting, I shall endeavour as briefly as possible to give a connected and, I trust, impartial survey of the state of the Christians in the Turkish dominions.

The great body of readers are by no means well informed respecting the various religious creeds of the East. I have heard it gravely stated by persons of education, that the inhabitants of the Turkish dominions professed exclusively the Mohammedan faith. Few have fully received and comprehended my assertion that there were Christians in the East, and even when this fact has been admitted as possible, it was supposed that they were foreign residents, and not the natives of the soil. To such persons, therefore, the information that nearly half the population of Asiatic Turkey profess the Christian faith, may seem novel and startling.

Nor do those among us who lay claim to more

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extensive knowledge of the subject, appear to have entertained any clear or decided views of eastern Christendom. By some the latter is made to consist only of the members of the Greek or Malekite church, who continue, in Syria and Asia Minor, to maintain the supremacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople with the ritual and customs of that see. Others imagine the Christians of these regions to be a species of Papists, while a third class have little more than a mere vague, undefined suspicion, that they are a degraded superstitious race, few in numbers, and contemptible in influence, possessing little to excite either interest or inquiry.

Yet there can be little doubt but that in the Oriental Christians we behold the descendants of the great Asiatic nations of antiquity. The Melkite and the Syrian represent the Syro-Macedonian race, which, under the rule of Alexander's successors, acquired to themselves the empire of the East. The Chaldean and the Nestorian are the only surviving human memorial of Assyria and Babylon, while in the features of the Persian Christian we trace the lineaments of the ancient Magian physiognomy. The Mohammedan religion is but a comparatively modern superstition, and its professors, for the most part in

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the East, are the descendants of the Arab invaders, or the posterity of the barbarians of the Caucasus. The same feeling, therefore, that teaches us to view with respect the relics of antiquity, and the tokens a civilization, whose sway has long been annihilated, may induce us to contemplate with interest the descendants of the mighty of our race.

Those who have studied with care the sculptured representations of the ancient Assyrians, and compared them with the modern inhabitants of the plains of Nineveh can hardly fail to trace the strong features of affinity which exist between the robed monarchs and priests of early days and the Christian peasants of Bagh Sheikha and Bagh Zani.

Nor should it be forgotten, that while change after change, and innovation after innovation, has altered repeatedly the aspect of the religious systems of Europe, the East has remained immovably steadfast to her ancient traditions, and presents to the unprejudiced and philosophic inquirer the unmistakeable outlines of Christianity in the third century. It is true, indeed, that the inward spirit has nearly deserted the outward shrine, and too often the actual existing state of our faith in the regions of the East bears the

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same resemblance to the primitive church that the motionless corpse does to the acting and thinking man. Yet even the sight of the dull, cold, and lifeless clay conveys a faithful idea of the living being as he moved and spoke, before the eyes were closed, and the soul had winged its flight.

The corruptions of Oriental Christianity have been chiefly internal, altering and changing little in its outward appearance, while in the West a contemporary of Basil or Cyprian would be chiefly struck by the external difference which the institutions of European piety present to the religious usages of his own day. The Romanist and the Protestant of modern times, would be equally at a loss to discover in the outward features of Oriental religion the type of his individual creed. The former might point with triumph to the opinions entertained respecting the sacrificial character of the Eucharist, to the veneration for tradition and the priestly office, to confession, invocation of saints, and many ritual observances, which bear a strong resemblance to his own system. The Protestant, on his side, might urge the nonreception of the theory of transubstantiation, the unlimited use of the scriptures by the laity, the marriage of ecclesiastics, the practice of receiving the Communion in both kinds, and last, though not

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least, the rejection of the Pope's supremacy. An impartial observer, whether his own views were Papal or Anglican, could hardly fail to admit that, with some peculiar errors omitted, the external fabric of Eastern Christianity bore no slight resemblance to the portrait drawn of the Church in early ages. Such an one, also, might find the explanation of this unchangeableness in the well-known oriental hatred of variation, in their adherence to even the forms of expression used in scriptural times* and in the tenacity with which they have resisted every known attempt at innovation. Not all the power, the bribes, or the sophistry of Rome, have been able to procure submission to permanent alterations, and the wiser and more prudent pontiffs have generally preferred contenting themselves with an empty act of homage, to hazarding the risk of enforcing a more marked uniformity between east and west. The Chaldeans or Syrians who have acknowledged the authority of the Pope, still retain their former service, manners, and customs; their ecclesiastics marry as before, the vernacular translations of the scriptures are widely circulated and thankfully perused, and a

* "As the Lord liveth," and "as thy soul liveth," is a common expression among the Tiyari Nestorians, used, not as a quotation, but as an affirmation.

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church that professes to be infallible has proved herself guilty of manifest inconsistency, by sanctioning with approval in one place, what she has been most forward to condemn in another.

The first impression that the inquirer into the state of Eastern Christendom, would probably entertain, when he came to reflect on the objects of his survey, would be that the services, rites, and liturgies of the Orientals were, in their construction, the models of a pure Hebrew type. The form of their edifices and the aspect, dress, and general appearance, of their priests would almost recall the days of the Temple worship, and the stranger who inhaled the odours of the incense, listened to the Chaldean or Syriac tones, and marked the sacrificial bearing of the whole service, might almost imagine himself an assistant at one of the symbolical oblations of the Levitical law. As his enquiries penetrated still deeper, he would meet with stronger traits of resemblance. The threefold divisions of the churches corresponding to a similar arrangement in the ancient Tabernacle and Temple, the deep mysterious aspect of the Sanctuary, walled in from ordinary view, and seen only through three narrow openings, before which at the time of consecration a veil is frequently suspended, would all tend to call to mind the ceremonial of the Old Testament.

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The constant use in the liturgies of the term sacrifice, and its application in various ways to the Holy Eucharist, gives a striking example of the sacrificial system of the East.

Like Clement of Rome in the First Century, the Oriental Christians, view the three orders of the Church, as the successive continuation of the Jewish hierarchy, and in all their Theological works, the analogy is carefully inculcated. The Syriac, Arabic, and Chaldean terms for the Christian altar, are all derived from the same root as the Hebrew word used in the Old Testament, and it is observable, that except among the Greeks, the appellation of "the Holy Table" is utterly unknown. The vestments, the incense, and the lights of the altar, have been copied by Western Churches, yet they have generally contrived to change their form or to alter their symbolical import. They have added to, or diminished from, the original patterns, while the East has observed them with scrupulous and minute fidelity.

Still more observable perhaps, has been the marked opposition offered by the Orientals to the image worship of the West. Interpreting literally the prohibition of the second Commandment, they have considered the making and adoration of statues as equally erroneous.

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Until a comparatively late period, the use of any painted or graven resemblance, even of a father, or of a dear friend, although totally unconnected with the idea of worship, would have been utterly proscribed. The scrupulous Oriental, when he received the gift of a crucifix from some Italian Missionary, rudely tore off the figure of the Saviour, and flung it from him with contempt and abhorrence, while he respectfully pressed the cross to his lips, and deposited it carefully in the bosom of his gown. The Gentile element has, since the promulgation of Christianity, been operating more or less in the West, while the Hebrew spirit, a spirit averse to the pictured resemblance of any Divine or Celestial being, has governed and influenced the spiritual children of the Apostles of the East.

The Eastern Christians have preserved among themselves the only remaining vestige of an hereditary priesthood. The Chaldean and Nestorian Patriarchs have not of late been elected to their high and important office by the suffrages either of clergy or people. From very early times, the unmarried uncle transmitted to a favoured nephew, the name and authority attached to the Patriarchal rank. For some years the appellation of Joseph designated the head of the Church of Amida, an Elias ruled the

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clergy of the Patriarchate of Mosul, while a Shimon, or Simon, presided over the rude Nestorians of the mountains. This custom, so peculiarly Hebrew, had gained the affections of the people to such an extent, that its abolition a short time back by Papal authority, nearly drove the Chaldeans into rebellion.

The Orientals possess in addition to their Patriarchs, the three orders to be found in the English Church. But the Eastern bishop differs as widely from the Anglican prelate in his temporal circumstances, as in external appearance. A venerable beard flows over a long vest of purple, covered by a gown of dark cloth. His shaven head is concealed by a black turban, twisted in a peculiar fashion, and a dark-coloured shawl encircles his waist. An attendant deacon precedes his steps, bearing a silver-tipped staff.

The income of an episcopal dignitary would be considered magnificent if it exceeded one hundred pounds per annum. Few receive more than an annual stipend of eighty pounds, and some can scarcely be said to have any revenue at all; their necessary expenses being furnished from the rents and lands of the monastery where they reside. The priest's income, is of course, much less than that of his superior, and would be thought fairly represented

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by the average rate of twenty pounds per annum. The deacons rarely receive anything, as they are generally merchants and men of business, from whom the Canons of the East do not require the surrender of their worldly calling, unless they wish to advance to the higher grade of the Priesthood.

The monks are supported as in Europe, by the revenues attached to each Monastery, which afford an ample supply for their slender wants. By the rules of the Eastern Churches most of the laity would be restricted from the use of animal food, during nearly a third portion of the year, but the abstinence of the monks, is of course more rigorous and severe. Their garb is not so varied or distinctive as that of monastic habits of Europe. A long dark vest, resembling the common zeboon of the country, with, perhaps, a jacket of black cloth, is the usual attire of an Eastern monk. They are a pale, mild, and gentle race, often ignorant, and not very liberal in their views, but during the frequent intercourse I have held with them, I never knew one who was a hypocrite, or a secret debauchée, two characters which have been supposed by some inseparable from the system of Monachism. I have seen these men eat thankfully, food which the lowest of English labourers would not touch. I have heard them engaged

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in praising God, at an hour when English rectors and curates have been quietly sleeping, or returning from some pleasant social party, and I have watched them delving and digging in their little plantations till the perspiration poured from them in streams. Such is the idle, lazy, and luxurious life of the Monks of the East.

The poverty of the clergy may, at first sight, seem to infer their abasement and degradation, but the respect in which their persons are held fully compensates for any inconvenience which they might suffer, were they the inhabitants of more civilized countries. The stout and prosperous merchant, the rich shopkeeper, or the stalwart squire, who condescend to pity and to patronize the threadbare curate or the small and ill-paid vicar, will be astonished to hear that at the approach of some ragged priest or bishop, a wealthy and well-dressed assembly will rise with respect and reverence to press his hand to their lips, and to seat him in the most comfortable corner of the diwan. Money and a home are little wanted where hospitality is a national virtue, and it is a priest that seeks for it, in the name of the God whom he serves.

Nor are the clergy less beloved on account of their general familiarity and condescension to even the

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meanest members of their flock. I have frequently witnessed the small room of a bishop crowded from morning till night with the poor, the distressed, and the unfortunate, each seeking from his spiritual pastor, advice, assistance, and consolation. The slender purse of a self-denying prelate often furnishes many with the means of life, and those who lack the direction of a man elevated above the passions and prejudices of the world, may find it freely bestowed by one who is, in every respect, the father of his people.

The Christians of the East are in some measure subject to their clergy in civil as well as in spiritual matters. The Patriarch of each community is responsible for the Kharadj or Poll-tax, paid by each individual Christian. He even possesses the power of inflicting imprisonment or stripes in certain cases, and it is frequently extremely difficult for an Oriental Christian to quit his own community, and transfer his obedience to another church.

The appointments to Episcopal rank are generally placed in the hands of the Patriarch of each church, who is, in turn, either elected by the Bishops, or succeeds to his office by hereditary right. But the chiefs of the Christians who reside at Constantinople are frequently liable to deposition. They are usually the creatures of some rich and wealthy laymen, who

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oblige the Bishops to acquiesce in their choice. Among the Armenians, an association of wealthy bankers generally nominate the Patriarch, while the head of the Greek Constantinopolitan Church is more commonly chosen by the Princes or Archons of the Fanar. Political motives may urge the Porte to depose a Patriarch and to exile him to the seclusion of some distant monastery, nor are any of the great spiritual chiefs exempt from so painful a degradation. But these measures are seldom taken, except against the Patriarchs resident at Constantinople, and even then they more frequently result from the cabals of the Christians and of foreign powers, than from any direct hostility to the individual on the part of the Turks.

By an edict, which dates from the period of the Mohammedan conquest, it has been forbidden to the Christians to erect new churches, although those at present in existence may lawfully be repaired. It has not, however, been found utterly impossible to elude this law, by obtaining a special firman from the Sultan, authorizing the erection of new edifices. In some cases, where the members of a Christian community have joined another Church, as was the case with the Syrians, who submitted themselves to the authority of the Roman See, the sacred building has been divided by a central partition and a separate

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end allotted to each of the contending parties. The Jacobite Syrians, however, made a vigorous attempt to recover possession of the whole of their divided edifices, alleging, with some appearance of plausibility, that they were originally the property of the sect, and could not be alienated from them.

The force of circumstances, and the character of their Mohammedan rulers, have introduced many restraints into the domestic regulations of the Oriental Christians. Their females appear abroad veiled in the same manner as those of the Mohammedans, and, according to an old Hebrew custom, they are obliged to confine themselves during the service at church to a latticed gallery, which is frequently too distant from the altar to allow of their seeing or hearing with comfort. I have been told, though I trust it is an unfounded calumny, that they frequently beguile the tedium, occasioned by a worship conducted in an unknown language, with lively discussions, and local gossip on the appearance of the males, and on he domestic concerns of their family circles. Few of them are able to read, but the prejudice at first entertained against female education is gradually decreasing, and we may hope soon that a new and more intellectual generation will atone for the deficiencies of their mothers and grandmothers.

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Many of the Christians have imbibed the manners of their Turkish masters, and treat their wives with little consideration or respect. Yet, upon the whole, the Christian women have more liberty than their Mohammedan sisters, and are not slaves to the caprices of an angry despot. They are not liable to have their affections slighted and their tranquillity destroyed by the introduction of a second wife or a favourite concubine into their homes, nor can the marriage tie be annulled with the same facility as among the Mohammedans. Of late years, also, the prevalence of a better and more enlightened spirit has secured for Christian wives and daughters, a greater amount of affection and kindness from those whom the religion of the Gospel enjoins to render both.

Few people have met with more undeserved reproaches from various Frank travellers than those Orientals who profess our faith. Looked upon as a degraded class, their acquaintance is little sought for by those who desire to make a figure in the eyes of the rulers of the land. The privacy of the unfortunate Christian is intruded upon, his best rooms given up, and his finest pipes and choicest provisions deemed only the just meed of the traveller, who, at the same time, despises and annoys him. If he murmur, the

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intelligent Frank notes his remarks in his book as an instance of the ingratitude of Christians; if he civilly submits to be put out of the way, his good humour is ascribed to servility. The intoxication of one individual and the falsehood of another, are made the characteristics of a whole body; and the wandering son of Japhet convinces himself, and would fain convince his readers, that the Christians of the East are the worst of created beings.

Yet even if they were as evil and worthless as the unsympathising strangers depict them, no slight share of the blame may rest upon their brethren in Europe. For the last few years, Turkey has been inundated with the scum of Italy and France, with adventurers whose vices and defects have called forth derision and contempt from Mohammedans themselves. It is a fact well ascertained by persons resident in the different maritime towns, that the increase of European settlers has kept equal pace with the increase of immorality and vice.

Yet in places where he is free from the contamination of Frank associates, the character of the native Christian can bear the test of a searching and impartial examination. He is neither a hero nor a saint, though within the compass of twenty years from the present time the Moslem sword has been red with

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the blood of martyrs. Oppression has made him servile, and ignorance, superstitious, but in morality he need not shrink from a comparison with the European professors of his faith. Rarely will a profane expletive or the irreverent use of the divine name be heard from one who understands in its literal import the precept "Swear not at all."

The Eastern Christian is generally a tender father and a faithful husband, he reverences his clergy, but reads for himself the Sacred Records. Unlike the inhabitants of some civilized nations, he does not conceive that orthodoxy resides more in a black garment than a white one; and he can abominate idols and idolatry without being thrown into convulsions at the sight of a cross. The perusal of the Divine word has neither made him a fanatic nor an opposer of the laws; and if it has produced in him sentiments of toleration, which some may deem too widely extended, it is a fault that most candid observers will deem venial.

At a time when Jews and Pagans draw so largely on our national sympathies, it can scarcely be expected that a mere Christian should gain much attention. The calamities of the Nestorians and their Patriarch have not even drawn a lament from those whose tender feelings were outraged by attacks on

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the interesting savages of the China seas. The murder of several hundreds of peaceful husbandmen holding a form of Christianity, which few Protestants would consider objectionable, has excited less interest than the story of a fugitive negro, who should invoke the genius of insulted freedom from the platform of Exeter Hall. Yet the Christian of the East has not been entirely passed over either by Europeans or Americans. The former have filled his country with Bishops in partibus, and Missionary Monks, while the latter have also transplanted to the far East the system of the Puritans, and the dogmas of Geneva. The motives of both are perhaps equally disinterested and sincere; yet they will probably end in the annihilation of Oriental Christianity as a system.

The American Missionaries have generally proved themselves men whom every one must respect for their sincerity and piety; but it seems clear that their system, if successful, would be the downfal of the Oriental Churches. Divided into small sections, animated by a zeal more fiery and unaccommodating than that which warms the colder bosoms of the North, the prevalence of the Presbyterian system would be the signal for universal confusion and party strife. The warm and ardent temperament of the

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Asiatic would not rest content with words, and an appeal to more potent weapons could have no other effect than to bring disgrace upon the Christian name.

But the Calvinistic Creed is too intellectual to adapt or to recommend itself to an Oriental mind. That warm and imaginative nature requires symbolism as the guide to religious truth. It adores not emblems, it only uses them: but still it cannot dispense with the assistance which they convey.

Yet there is one system which professes symbolism in common with the Oriental, and desires to subdue all other forms of Christianity to herself. The Church of Rome, that wonderful and gigantic power whose footsteps are everywhere, is gaining daily fresh strength in the East. Active, restless, and bold, her emissaries move from city to city with the celerity and order of trained soldiers. They tolerate what they have at present no strength to change, and extend at once the political power of France and their own authority. Possessed of a system at the same time flexible and firm, they can in one breath proclaim their unchangeableness, and assimilate themselves to the prejudices of the East.

Russia protects the Greek, and France the Roman Catholic Christians, while the Protestant powers of

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Europe are to both objects of suspicion and dislike. Yet in the event of the downfal of Turkey, a consummation which cannot long be delayed, the Christians cannot be overlooked or disregarded. Nearly all the commerce, trade, and money of the Ottoman Empire is in their hands. The Nestorians and the Maronites have shown themselves equal to the fatigues of warfare and the dangers of active strife. The power of the Christians, therefore, is not to be despised, particularly if united by the creed of Rome into one body, and supported either by France or Russia.

The time may come when English politicians will regret their short sightedness, in neglecting to create a friendly interest in the midst of an empire whose present dynasty must soon surrender to its ancient possessors their ill-used and usurped dominion. When the Russian Eagle waves from the towers of Constantinople, and the French standard floats over the dome of Omar, the rulers of England may feel bootless and unavailing sorrow that they have treated with contempt and indifference the important claims of the Christians of the East.*

* Under this title I have referred principally to the Chaldean and Syrian Christians, as the Greeks may be considered as Europeans, or at least the observers of an European form of Christianity.

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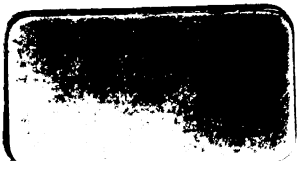

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